

THE INFLUENCES OF PURITANISM  
ON  
ENGLISH LIFE AND CHARACTER.

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## P R E F A C E .

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Having been born and brought up in a family of Independents, in which the puritan traditions were observed with some strictness, the writer of the following pages was sent out into the world with a certain dread of dire punishments if he offended the Majesty of God by Sabbath desecration, playing card-games, dancing, going to theatres, etc. His reason, however, soon found itself in open conflict with his feelings on these matters. And being convinced that one could serve God and be a true son, and yet go to the theatre, or play card-games, or join in dancing, he ventured to embark on the forbidden path. It was with feelings of venturesome<sup>ness</sup> that he first entered a theatre; and he must confess that the glamour of the stage and the enjoyment of the play, were considerably reduced by fears and doubts that would keep arising in his mind. Like Bunyan, who expected the belfry to fall upon him, so this puritan youth feared lest the roof of the theatre might come down in crashing judgment upon him.

Years later the writer entered the ministry of the Congregational Church. His experience has been that, while the greater number of its members, and especially of the younger members, have little or no feeling about the

incompatibility of the christian life with dancing, card-games, visiting theatres, etc. so long as one endeavours to live in the spirit of Christ, many of the older members look askance at, and with disapproval on, such things. And in many churches there is real opposition between the younger and older members; the former desiring to use the church-hall for dancing, whist-drives, etc; the latter offering strong opposition to such desecration.

Such then are the experiences which led the writer to enquire for himself by reading and research, into this movement we call puritanism.

In the following pages he has endeavoured to trace the origin and causes of puritanism, and to set forth the puritans' programme - their ideas and ideals. This is largely covered by the Introduction and Chapter I. There were, however, modifications of, or additions to, their original ideals. The puritans of the Commonwealth were the direct descendents of the Elizabethan puritans, yet they were not identical with them. And these differences are brought out in the later chapters which deal more especially with the influences of puritanism on English life and character.

The influences of puritanism which so far seem to have been permanent, are seen in the sphere of morals, freedom, literature and business, and these matters have been considered in Chapter II, III, IV and V respectively. In the 'Conclusion', Chapter VI,

a criticism of puritanism has been attempted, but in Chapters II, III, IV and V it was found impossible to avoid criticism altogether and confine it to the last chapter.

The writer desires to express his gratitude to Professor A.R.S. Kennedy, D.D. whose encouragement at the commencement of this work enabled him to surmount an almost insurmountable obstacle, - the difficulty of attending the University and carrying on the work of the ministry in a church situated more than 200 miles from Edinburgh; also to his supervisor, Professor James Mackinnon, Ph.D. D.D. Ll.D. and to Principal T. Hywel Hughes, M.A. D.Litt. D.D. both of whom by their sympathetic interest, and invaluable advice, criticism and guidance in reading, have considerably lightened the task.

Thanks are also due to the Trustees and Librarian of Dr. Williams' Library, London, from which place there has flowed a constant stream of books; also to the Governors and Librarian of the John Rylands' Library, Manchester, where much time has been spent by, and every assistance given to, the writer.

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N .

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Literary genius and daring adventures on the sea are the two thoughts most intimately associated in the minds of English people with the Elizabethan Age. But while men of letters were contributing priceless treasures to the National literature, and adventurers were adding new glory to the story of English Courage and Enterprise, a body of religious enthusiasts were hazarding their lives for the sake of an ideal.

Though whole-heartedly loyal to the Queen, these religious zealots occasioned not a little strife and discord by their opposition to the religious settlement which Her Majesty sought to impose on the Nation. And the dissensions and strife thus occasioned may stand out as a disagreeable contrast to the peaceable growth of sweet songs and soul-stirring dramas in that Golden-Age of English literature, and as a detraction from the growing patriotism of adventurers, whose daring was the measure of their love for the Queen. Nevertheless, the Puritan movement, as it is called, however discordant it may appear in this setting, was destined to contribute as much as, if not more than, either literature or exploration to the ultimate well-being of the Nation.

To the twentieth century mind, with its larger tolerance and its truer understanding of the Nature of Scripture, it is

conceivable that the Puritan revolt may appear as an instance of "much ado about nothing", and accordingly be dismissed as a child's battle over unessentials due to ignorance and prejudice. But such an attitude of mind does less than justice to the Puritans, since it manifests a thorough misunderstanding of their sincere and deep-seated hopes and fears. Had the Puritans possessed modern knowledge about the Scriptures and inspiration, had they grasped the fact that there had been an Evolution in polity in the primitive church from a form of independency to Presbyterianism and to Episcopacy<sup>1</sup> it is conceivable that they might not have been so urgent in their demand for the setting up of Presbyterianism in the National Church. But they hadn't this knowledge. They believed that the Church of Christ was outlined in the New Testament: and that that church was Presbyterian. Yet, had they possessed the modern out-look on this matter, there would still have been a Puritan revolt, Anglicanism being what it was. For the passion to displace Episcopacy by Presbyterianism was motived not merely by the conviction that the latter form of church government was alone scriptural, but also by the belief that Presbyterianism was more likely to secure that moral and spiritual awakening which appeared so needful.

So also with the Vestarian Controversy. To the modern mind the dress of the clergy may be of little importance.

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1. Vide Canon Streeter: "The Primitive Church".

After all, vestments are but the drapery of religion, and may do little more than please or offend the individual worshipper's aesthetic taste. But in the Puritan Age vestments had, through long usage in the Roman church, a significance which might be psychologically detrimental to the growth of protestant ideas. They had been too intimately bound up with Romanism. And the Puritans, who were fiercely protestant, lived too near the days when Roman ideas had hurtfully dominated the mind in religion, to be happy about the Anglican compromise which not merely permitted, but enforced, the wearing of vestments which were too reminiscent of Rome. To the Puritans, the Reformation seemed in danger.

Rather than being a mere quibble over unessentials, Puritanism, we feel, was motivated by the sincerest convictions about, and the deepest insight into, those moral and spiritual realities upon which the purity of religion and the moral strength of a nation depend. That the puritans made mistakes is but to say that they were human: that there was need for their witness, the following pages, it is hoped, will make evident.

The puritan movement, however, was not confined to those who desired and worked for the setting up of a Presbyterian polity in place of Episcopacy. This section of the Puritans, it is true, loom largest in the Elizabethan Age, simply because they were in the majority, and were the most

active and aggressive opponents of Anglicanism. They threatened its very existence. And the alarm they occasioned drew forth from two of the greatest champions of Episcopacy, Whitgift and Hooker, apologies in defence of Anglicanism.

The Sectaries of the Elizabethan Age were of various shades of religious opinion, and it would be wrong to speak of them all as Puritans. But one branch of them, the Separatists, who later became known as Brownists, and who were the forerunners of the Congregationalists or Independents, were thoroughgoing Puritans. There seems no doubt that at first they shared in the hopes and advocated the polity of the Presbyterian Puritans: but unlike them they did not "tarrie for the magistrate" to legislate for reform, but began the reform among themselves in separate communities. Several streams of ideas converged together ultimately to make them what they became, which we shall consider later.

Less notice was taken of the Separatists than of the Presbyterians in the Elizabethan Age, partly because they were insignificant in numbers, and meeting apart from the Anglican Church they were easily tracked down, and it was easy to set the law in operation against them; partly because they were less aggressive, seeking only to worship quietly in their conventicles, rather than advocating the overthrow of Episcopacy. They were, of course, an offence to Anglicanism,

but were despised and persecuted, rather than feared.

Puritanism also had its many advocates in the Anglican church itself. Men like Humphreys and Sampson and, indeed, most of the earliest bishops, who accepted Episcopacy and all it involved, were nevertheless dissatisfied with the vestments and ritual, and hoped and looked for a simplification of the same. They would have purified Anglicanism of its Roman vestiges, but they were ready to accept its polity or government by Bishops, etc.

Puritanism, it will be seen, was a complex movement. There may have been an unanimity of ultimate ideals among the Puritans, but conflicting and divergent views of attaining the ideals divided them.

There seems no doubt that what gave rise to puritanism was a growing conviction in certain minds that the English Reformation was not moving along the lines of thorough-going protestantism. Protestant influences had been moulding the thoughts of Englishmen for years before Henry VIII definitely severed the Pope's authority in England. Wycliffe with his Bible in the vernacular and his Lollard preachers was one source of enlightenment. Erasmus was another. His critical method applied to the New Testament was remarkable in that it dared to suggest errors in the Vulgate Bible - the official Bible of the Roman church. Martin Dorpins of the University

of Louvain wrote, ".... I hear ... that you have been correcting the text of the New Testament, and that you have made Annotations, not without theological value, on more than one thousand places ..... It cannot be that the unanimous universal Church now for so many centuries has been mistaken, which always has used and still both sanctions and uses this version"<sup>1</sup>

As a result of this critical examination of Scripture Erasmus was led to the conclusion, says Dr Fairbairn, that "The Church was the congregation of all men throughout the whole world who agree in the faith of the Gospel. As to the Lord's Supper, he saw neither good nor use in a body imperceptible to the senses, and he found no place in Scripture which said that the Apostles had consecrated bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord..... Ceremonies were positive laws made by Bishops or Councils, Popes or Orders, which could not supersede the laws of Nature or of God."<sup>2</sup> Erasmus "was governed by this historical idea; things unknown to the New Testament were unnecessary to the Christian religion; what contradicted the mind of Christ or hindered the realisation of His ends was injurious to

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1. F. Seeborn. "Colet, Erasmus and More". pp. 314-318.

2. A.M. Fairbairn. "Cambridge Modern History. Vol.II.  
p. 699.

the Church."<sup>1</sup>

Another influence was Martin Luther, Bilney, Coverdale, Latimer and others, who had been influenced by the critical method of Erasmus at Cambridge, also came under the more heart-stirring influence of Luther with his doctrine of "Justification by Faith" at Cambridge too. These same men with others used to meet in a tavern to study the reformer's works which, tavern, says Strype, "was known by the nickname of 'Germany'"<sup>2</sup>

The greatest influence in the formation of the Puritan mind came however from John Calvin. The Puritan polity, especially the Presbyterian Puritans,<sup>1</sup> was almost identical with that adopted in Geneva. And their theology was Calvinistic too. But they had been prepared for that by Luther's idea of justification by faith alone. This idea was fundamental to Calvinism, and as Dr Mackinnon says, "There can be little doubt as to the source of the influence which transformed Calvin into an Evangelical reformer, and markedly influenced his thought as an evangelical theologian. Like Zwingli, he was a humanist before he became the votary of the new Evangelism ..... All this is a reflex of the Master mind of Wittenberg."<sup>3</sup>

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- 1: A.M. Fairbairn. "Cambridge Modern History".  
For some account of Erasmus' influence at Cambridge see Foxe's "Acts & Monuments" (Book of Martyrs) Vol.II. p.699, & 71 (Bilney's letter to Tunstal). Also R. Demus: "Hugh Latimer". P.371.f.
2. Strype. "Memorials". Vol. I. p.568
3. Dr James Mackinnon "Luther and the Reformation" Vol.IV. pp. 347,349



It was not till the reign of Mary however that the English Protestants came into closest contact with Geneva. When Henry VIII assumed the Headship of the Church, whatever Protestant thought there was in England was chiefly due to Wycliffe, Erasmus and Luther.

It is convenient to date the beginning of the English Reformation in 1534, when Henry VIII banished the Pope's Authority over the church in England and assumed the title of "Supreme Head on Earth of the Church of England".<sup>1</sup> But while this breach with Rome was an important step on the way to Protestantism, it was but a step, and Henry moved no further. His motive for this breach was purely domestic or political, not religious. Since the Pope refused to sanction the King's divorce from Catherine, the only way to the attainment of his desire was to banish the Pope's jurisdiction and to assume authority himself. He had no intention or desire to change the established religion either in form or belief. It is true that, two years after this event, the "Articles of Religion"<sup>2</sup> drawn up by the King, under the influence of reformers such as Cranmer, Latimer, Shaxton and Thomas Cromwell, reveal a protestant tendency. Neal says of them,

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1. 26 Henry VIII. Cap.1. "Statutes at Large". Vol.III. p.181 f (Ed. John Raithby, 1811).

2. Neal "Hist. of the Puritans". Vol.I. pp.19-21 (Ed.1822)

"One sees here the dawn of the Reformation; the Scriptures and Ancient Creeds are made the standards of faith without the tradition of the church or the decrees of the Pope; the doctrine of justification by faith is well stated; four of the seven Sacraments are passed over, and Purgatory is left doubtful. But", Neal goes on to say, "transubstantiation, auricular confession, the worshipping of images and saints still remained".<sup>1</sup> But any doubts as to Henry's real religious sympathies were entirely removed in 1539, when the "Statute of the Six Articles"<sup>2</sup> revealed the King to be sternly on the side of Rome.

In the brief reign of Edward VI which followed, extending from 1547 to 1553, a determined effort was made to establish Protestantism. Under the energetic leadership of Somerset, the Protector, and Cranmer, the Archbishop, a series of measures were put into operation which transformed the whole aspect of religion. In May, 1547, it was decided to make a visitation of the churches, draw up a book of homilies, and a series of injunctions and instructions to the clergy and people. Priests were required by the injunctions to

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1. Neal, "History of the Puritans", Vol. I. p.21 (Ed.1822)

2. 31, Henry VIII. Cap.14 (Statutes at Large Vol.III. p.287f)  
 "An Act for abolishing of Diversity of opinions  
 of certain Articles concerning Christian  
 Religion".

preach against pilgrimages and praying to images, and to exhort the people to works of faith and charity. Images abused with pilgrimages and offerings were to be taken down in all the parish churches, and within three months every church must be provided with a Bible in English, and within twelve months with Erasmus' paraphrase of the New Testament. Processions in Churches or church-yards were forbidden, and all shrines or other monuments of feigned miracles were to be removed. And according to the "Articles of Visitation" the clergy were to be asked, "whether they had preached against the usurped power of Rome and on the supremacy of the King; ... if they had taught the Pater Noster, Articles of Our Faith, and the Ten Commandments in English; if duly and reverently administered the Sacraments; and whether they leave the cure to rude and unlearned men; if they have provided a Bible of the largest volume in English; if they be common hunters and resorters to taverns and ale-houses, giving themselves to excessive drinking and rioting and playing unlawful games".<sup>1</sup> When Parliament met on November 4th the same year, instead of going back on these measures, it pressed forward with the reformation. The "Statute of the Six Articles" was repealed, together with the Acts of Richard II and Henry V against Lollards; and

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1. Strype "Ecc. Memorials" (Ed. 1822) vol. II. pp. 75-83

all the prohibitions against printing the Scriptures in English, and against reading, preaching, teaching and expounding the Scriptures, were erased from the Statute Book.<sup>1</sup> The King's supremacy was reaffirmed, though lighter penalties were attached to a denial of his supremacy by word, than to a denial by writing, printing or action.<sup>2</sup>

In the second parliament of Edward VI, which opened November 4th 1548, an Act for the uniformity of religious services and for the administration of the Sacraments was placed on the Statute Book<sup>3</sup>. In the meantime an English Prayer-Book had been compiled which was largely the work of Cranmer. It bore little resemblance to the service-books of the Zwinglian and Calvinistic churches. "Its affinity with Lutheran liturgies was more marked", says Pollard, "because the Anglican and Lutheran revisers made the ancient uses of the church their groundwork, while the other reformed churches sought to obliterate as far as possible all traces of the Mass. It is the most conservative of all the

1. I. Edward VI. Cap. 12, 3 (Statutes at Large Vol. III p. 492f )

2. I. Edward VI. Cap. 12 Compare sections 6 & 7. Ibid pp. 494-495.

3. 2 Edward VI. Cap. 1 Ibid p. 517f The Act not passed until January 7th 1549.

liturgies of the Reformation. Its authors wished to build upon, and not to destroy, the past; and the materials on which they worked were almost exclusively the Sarum use and the Breviary of Cardinal Quignot".<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless this Prayer-Book marked a real advance towards Protestantism in that the Services were in English, private Masses were forbidden, and the Lord's Supper must be administered in both kinds to laity as well as clergy. It is true that some ambiguity existed in the meaning of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Cranmer no doubt intended a change to be made from the Romanist idea of transubstantiation. But being more Lutheran than Calvinist it is possible that he believed that the Elements in the Sacrament were in some vague manner transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

But any doubts on this matter were removed in 1552, when the Prayer-Book in a revised form was sent out by the Authority of Parliament, accompanied by an Act of Uniformity.<sup>2</sup> A comparison between the two Communion Orders will reveal the differences. The term "minister" is substituted for "Priest". Other changes are<sup>3</sup> :-

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1. Pollard "Cambridge Modern History". Vol.II. p.484  
Vide Brightman "The English Rite" Vol.X. pp.78 f
  2. 5. Edward VI. Cap. 1 (Statutes at Large p. 370f )
  3. E. Cardwell, "The Books of Common Prayer set forth in the reign of Edward VI. compared (1841) ad loco.

1549 Edition.

And when he delivereth the sacrament of the body of Christ he shall say to every one -

"The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy body and soul to everlasting life".

And the minister delivereth the sacrament of the blood and giving to every one to drink once and no more shall say -

"The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul to everlasting life".

1552 Edition.

And when he delivereth the bread he shall say - "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving."

And the minister that delivereth the cup shall say :

"Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful."

The Protestant tendency had also been manifested in the Parliament of 1549 which had enacted "That all Books called Antiphoners, Missals, Grailes, Processionals, Manuals, Legends, Dies, Portuases, Primers in Latine or English, Couchers, Journals, Ordinals or other Books or writings whatsoever heretofore used for Service of the Church - - shall be by Authority of this present Act clearly and utterly abolished, extinguished, and forbidden for ever to be used or kept in the Realm ---"<sup>1</sup>

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1. 3 & 4 Edward VI. Cap. X.1 (Statutes at Large p. 565).

And the same parliament ordered all images to be destroyed.<sup>1</sup>  
 Furthermore 42 Articles of Faith, from which the present 39  
 Anglican Articles were taken, were drawn up by Cranmer and  
 Ridley, and put forth as "Articles agreed upon by the Bishops  
 and other learned men in the Convocation of London in the Year  
 1552, for the avoiding of diversity of opinions, and establishing  
 consent touching true Religion. Published by the King's  
 Authority".<sup>2</sup>

Thus by the end of Edward's reign Protestantism seemed  
 securely established in England, so far as that could be  
 achieved by Acts of Parliament. And with regard to the Articles  
 of Faith, and the significance of the Lord's Supper, it was a  
 Protestantism that was verging on the ultra-protestant position  
 of Calvin. Martyr and Bucer had greatly influenced Cranmer  
 along this path.<sup>3</sup> Yet it was in this hey-day of Protestantism  
 that Puritanism began to make its presence felt. The reason  
 was that while the church was Protestant in doctrine, it was not  
 altogether Protestant in its ceremonies. The Prayer-Book, as  
 we have remarked, was modelled on Roman usages, and it therefore

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1. 3 & 4 Edward VI. Cap. X.2

2. Neal. "Puritans" (1822) Vol. I. p.62

3. Vide Strype. "Eccl. Memorials" (Ed. 1816)  
 p. 338.

urged practises that were offensive to some minds. But the revolt against this was not the first cause of battle. This did not reveal itself till the next reign. Vestments were the cause of the first offensive.

An Act of Edward's reign which has not been mentioned, was known as "An Act for the ordering of Ecclesiastical Ministers"<sup>1</sup> This Act set forth the form of the consecration service for Archbishops, Bishops, priests and deacons, prescribing the official habits to be worn, and the oath to be taken.<sup>2</sup> At this Service a bishop must wear a white surplice, carry the bread and chalice in one hand and the Bible in the other. And the Oath necessitated his swearing "By God, the Saints, and the Holy Gospel".

When this Order first appeared John Hooper had denounced it in a sermon before the Court. "Yet do I much marvel", he said"..... that he that will be admitted to the ministry of God's word or His Sacraments, must come in white vestments;..... And sure I am, they have not in the word of God, that this a minister should be apparelled, nor yet in the primitive and best

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1. 3 & 4 Edward VI. Cap. XII.

2. Vide Grafton, "Form and manner or making and consecrating Archbishops, Bishops, Priests and Deacons". (1549).

Reprinted in "Documents of the reign of Edward VI."  
Parker Society.



church. It is rather the habit and vesture of Aaron and the gentiles, than of the ministers of Christ. Further, where, and of whom, and when have they learned, that he that is called to the ministry of God's word, should hold the bread and chalice in one hand and the book in the other? Why do they not as well give him in his hand the font and water? For the one is a Sacrament as well as the other. If the font be too great, take him a basin with water, or such like vessel. But in this matter and in other, as tolerable things be to be borne with for the weak's sake awhile, so I think it not meet, before the King's majesty and his most honourable council, to halt in any part, but to say truth; that they knowing the same, may redress it as soon as may be, as my part is, and all other private persons', to pray them to do the same, and beseech God to restore us to the primitive church which never yet had nor shall have any match or like".<sup>1</sup> Accordingly when Hooper was nominated to the see of Gloucester in 1550 he refused for some time to submit to the required consecration service. The King talked of using his prerogative, as Supreme Head of the church, to dispense with the required order in Hooper's case. But Ridley and most of the bishops would have no dispensation.

In the meantime Hooper appealed for advice in the matter

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1. "Early Writings of Bishop Hooper". (Parker Society XI)  
p. 479.

to the two leading Protestants in England, Peter Martyr and M. Bucer. They had left the Continent after the proclamation of the Interim<sup>1</sup> by Charles V, which was a period of compromise between Protestantism and Catholicism, pending the settlement of the question by the Council of Trent; and were the occupants of the chairs of Divinity at Oxford and Cambridge respectively.

Martyr advised that Hooper should wear the vestments in this case, "when the laws of the land were so constituted, that a minister might not officiate, or exercise his office, except he were so apparelled, habits being things in their own nature indifferent, and which might have a tendency to edification."<sup>2</sup> Martyr, however, was really against the "habits" as is seen from a letter to a nameless friend. "That being indifferent things of themselves", he writes, "they make no man either godly or ungodly. Yet he judged it more expedient, that garments and diverse other things were taken away when it might conveniently be; whereby ecclesiastical things might be done in a more plain manner. For when signs are defended and retained with so obstinate a mind, which are not underpropt with God's word, there men are often times less desirous of the

1. Vide Gairdner, "Lollardy and the Reformation" Vol. III. pp. 155, 158.

2. Vide Strype, "Memorials of Crammer", pp 302-309.

things themselves signify thereby. And where show most prevails, there commonly that which is serious is much neglected."<sup>1</sup>

Bucer answered, "That he was exceedingly sorry for this controversy, which so grievously hindered his (Hooper's) ministry, that he could have been willing to have given a great deal, that either it had not been moved at all, or speedily removed..... That it was his desire to have all things reduced to apostolic simplicity in external things.... and that the abuse he had seen of the garments in many places in England, he could be willing to suffer torment in his flesh, that they were taken away. But that which weighed most with him was.....that church robbers did still hold and spoil the chief parish churches; that commonly one man had four or six of them, or more; and that many patrons bestowed two or three upon their stewards or huntsmen; and that upon condition that a good portion of the profits should be reserved to themselves..... that there were so few gospel preachers, that many churches had no sermons in five or six years, or more".

He goes on to describe further abuses .. "which the members of Christ.....should seek to overthrow, and then

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1. Strype. "Eccl. Memorials" (Ed. 1822) Vol. II.  
p.p. 350-351.

the abuse of apparel, and of all other things, would utterly be abandoned, and all the badges and shadows of anti-Christ would vanish away".<sup>1</sup>

To John a Lasco Bucer wrote: "The more diligently he weighed what fruit men gathered by the controversy of vestures, and what Satan went about hereby to work, he could have wished that it had never once been spoken of; but that all of their function had stoutly and unanimously gone forward in teaching true repentance and the wholesome use of all things, and in commending the putting on of the apparel of salvation. As to Hooper's business, he did acknowledge if it were his own case, if he thought ceremonies and vestures were impure of themselves, he would not in any wise take upon him the office of a Bishop till they were taken away by authority.... But so far as he yet saw, he could not be brought by any scripture to deny that the true minister of God might use, without superstition, and to a certain edification, any of those vestments which the Anti-Christian Church used".<sup>2</sup>

Thus Martyr and Bucer were for wearing the vestments under the circumstances, and in the interests of peace and progress in religion. But Hooper could not persuade himself to comply with their advice. To him those who used "such

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1. Strype, "Ecc. Memorials" (Ed. 1822) Vol. II. pp 353-354.

2. Ibid. pp. 351, 352.

vestments or apparel, as obscure the ministry of Christ's Church (and) representeth the form and fashion of the Aaronical ministry of the old law, abrogated and ended in Christ",<sup>1</sup> were classed among those who took away honour and praise from God by suffering "many tokens, monuments and ceremonies of superstition".<sup>2</sup>

After being inhibited from preaching and confined to his house, Hooper was handed over to the keeping of Grammer, and later confined in the Fleet for his obstinacy. But Edward excused Hooper from taking the Oath, and requested the Archbishop to dispense with the habits in this instance.<sup>3</sup> Grammer and the Council, however, were averse to making an exception, and after six months hesitation, a compromise was arrived at. Hooper consented to wear the apparel at the Consecration on condition that he might dispense with it afterwards.<sup>4</sup>

During the next reign the Protestant settlement achieved under Edward VI was subjected to greater criticism. While Mary was doing her utmost to uproot Protestantism and exterminate Protestants, the divines who had fled to the continent to escape her fury, were taking their sojourn abroad as an opportunity for reviewing and correcting the Edwardian Anglicanism. It would seem that these refugees looked upon

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1. "Early writings of Bishop Hooper" (Parker Socy. XI) p.554  
 2. Ibid. p.554  
 3. Neal, "Hist. of the Puritans" (1822) Vol. I. p.58  
 4. Ibid. p.58.

the Catholic reaction of Mary's reign as a natural episode, Mary being what she was; and were confident that the experiment made in Protestantism would be speedily tried again. In the meantime, therefore, they either perpetuated, or modified the Edwardian protestantism as contained in the prayer-book, and awaited the coming of a better day.

Singularly enough the Divines who settled at Strasburg, Zurich and Basle, remained on the whole loyal to the Edwardian settlement, while those who congregated at Frankfort manifested considerable dissatisfaction with it.

This Frankfort Church is of considerable interest and importance if we are to understand the ideals and aims of the puritans of the next reign. It may with not a little truth be called the nursery of puritanism. And therefore it does not seem out of place to spend a little time in considering the "troubles"<sup>1</sup> of this church.

On June 27th 1554, Edmonde Sutton, William Williams, William Whittingham, Thomas Wood "with their companies came to Frankford in Germany"<sup>2</sup>, and were granted the privilege of forming themselves into a church by the senator, John Glanburge.

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1. Vide "A Brief discours off the Troubles begonne at Frankford in Germany, 1554" by William Whittingham. (Ed. John Petherham, London, 1846).

2. Ibid P.V:

Being free to choose their own orders, they began almost immediately to question the validity of the Edwardian prayer-book. "When the church was in this sorte graunted", writes Whittingham, "they consulted amonge themselves what order off service they shulde vse..... at length the Englishe order was perused, and this by generall consente was concluded that the answeringe alowde after the minister shoulde not be vsed, the letanye, surplice, and many other thinges also ommitted, for that in those reformed churches, suche thinges woulde seeme more then strange. It was further agreed uppon, that the minister (in place off the Englishe Confession) shulde vse an other, bothe off more effecte, and also framed accordinge to the state and time. And the same ended, the people to singe a psalme in meetre in a plaine tune as was, and is accustomed in the frenche, dutche, Italian, Spanishe, and Skottishe churches, that don, the minister to praye for the assistance off Gods holie spirite and so to proceade to the sermon. After the sermon, a generall praier for all estates and for oure countrie of England was also devised, at the ende of whiche praier was joined the lords praier and a rehersall of tharticles off oure belieff, whiche ended the people to singe an(d) other psalme as afore. Then the minister pronouncinge this blessinge. The peace off God etc. - or some other off like effecte the people to departe".<sup>1</sup>

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1. "A Brief discours off the Troubles" pp. VI & VII.

Beside this revision of the "Order of Service" in the Edwardian Prayer-Book, and their decision to dispense with the surplice, they also changed the Communion Order etc. "As touchinge the ministration off the Sacraments sundrie things were also by common consente omitted, as superstitions and superfluous"<sup>1</sup>. They also drew up a form of discipline to be accepted by every member of the church. "And for that it was thoughte the churche could not longe contynewe in good order withowte discipline, there was also a brieffe forme devised, declaringe the necessite, the causes, and the order thereof, whereunto all those that were present subscribed, shewinge thereby that they were ready and willinge to submit themselves to the same, accordinge to the rule prescribed in gods holie worde, at whiche time it was determined by the congregation that all suche as shulde come after shulde doo the like, before they were admitted as members off that churche".<sup>2</sup> They also - as a church - chose their own ministers and deacons<sup>3</sup>, and entered on the new experiment on June 29th 1554. These big and momentous changes had therefore been carried out in two days.

It seems evident from the alacrity with which these alterations were made, that they were due not merely to the

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1. Ibid. p. VII

2. Ibid. pp. VII & VIII

3. Ibid. p. VII.



fact, as stated, that the refugees were influenced by their neighbours who used the "French or Dutch" order. They had not been long enough there to be so influenced, unless they already had a predisposition towards that order. And one is forced to the conclusion that the Frankfort church represented a body of opinion which in Edward's reign was dissatisfied with the "form" which the Protestant Settlement of religion had assumed, and were attracted by the French or Genevan form. They also presumed that others of their countrymen were of the same mind with themselves, since, on August 2nd, that year, they sent letters to the refugees at Strasburg, Zurich, Denisburg and Emden, inviting them to Frankfort.<sup>1</sup> The first reply from Strasburg was evasive, whether the divines there misunderstood, or intentionally disregarded the contents of the Frankfort letter, they at all events refused the invitation, and replied to the effect that they understood that Frankfort wanted ministers or leaders. And they said "that in case they might get D. Ponet, Maister Scory, D. Bale, or D. Cox, or two off them, they should be well furnished, if not they would appoint one at Strasburg and another should come from Zurich". And Grindal wrote to Scory at Emden asking him to be superintendent of the Frankfort church.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid. p.VII

2. Ibid. pp. XIII.

This, of course, was not what the Frankfort Church desired, and in the meantime they had themselves invited John Knox from Geneva, Haddon from Strasburg - who however declined to come - and Thomas Lever from Zurich to be their ministers. Naturally, therefore, the Strasburg letter was resented, on the ground that the Frankfort church claimed the right of appointing its own ministers. And Frankfort informed Strasburg that they didn't require "anye superintendent to take the chieff charge and governement, for the choice and election thereof (yff suche a one had beene necessary) ought to have byn reserved to the congregation, which fully determined at that tyme to have the church governed by 2 or 3 grave, godly and lerned ministers of like authoritie, as is accustomed in the beste reformed churches".<sup>1</sup> The revolt from Authority in religion, such as had obtained under Romanism, and was taken over by Edwardian Anglicanism, and was to be perpetuated by Elizabeth, is here very evident.

The reply from Zurich, dated October 13th 1554, stated that the divines there didn't wish to leave their studies, but if they were still desired at Frankfort, they would come only if they "maie altogether serve and praise god as freely and as uprightly....as the order laste taken in the Church of

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1. Ibid. p. XIV.

England permittethe and prescribeth (for we are fully determined to admitt and vse no other)"<sup>1</sup> Chambers also came the same month from Zurich, but returned on finding that Frankfort was determined not to use the Edwardian prayer-book. In the meantime John Knox had accepted the pastorate (September 24th)<sup>2</sup>

Frankfort's reply to Zurich (November 15th) gives the reasons for their departing from the Anglican Order. Among other things it says: "As touchinge the effecte of the booke, we desire the execution thereof as muche as yow, (so farr as God's worde dothe commende it) but as for the unprofitable ceremonies, as well by his (i.e. Chamber's) consent as by ours (they) are not to be vsed. And althoughe they were tollerable (as some are not) yet beinge in a strange commo wealthe, we coulde not be suffred to put them in vse, and better it were they shoulde never be practised, then they shulde be the subuersion off oure churche, whiche shulde fall in great hassard by vsinge them".<sup>3</sup> They also said in effect that their fathers had altered the prayer-book, and would have done so again, if circumstances had not prevented them, and therefore they felt at liberty to do the same.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid. p. XVI.
  2. Ibid. p. XIX.
  3. Ibid. p. XX.
  4. Ibid. pp. XXI:

On November 28th Chambers and Grindal came to Frankfort with another letter from Strasburg, urging them to conformity with the Anglican Order, and suggesting that they were condemning the prayer-book which was being sealed with the blood of the martyrs in England - "least by muche alteringe off the same", they wrote, "we shoulde seeme to condemne the chieff authors thereof, who as they nowe suffer, so are they moste readie to confirme that facte with the price off their blouds....."<sup>1</sup> And in his conversation with the Frankfort Church, Grindal declared that while they had come "chieflye for the stablishinge of the booke off England" nevertheless they did not desire "to have it so strictly observed but that suche ceremonies and thinges whiche the countrie coulde not beare might well be omitted, so that they might have the substance and effect thereof"<sup>2</sup>. And he wanted to know what parts of the prayer-book they would admit. Frankfort's answer was, "what they coulde prove off that Booke to stande withe God's worde, and the countrie permit"<sup>3</sup>

In their letter dated December 3rd, and signed by John Knox, Fox and fifteen more, the Frankfort church declared its determination to abide by its first decision not to accept the English Prayer-Book. They contended that they only omitted ceremonies for which only the wilfully ignorant could

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1. Ibid. pp. XXII & XXIII.  
 2. Ibid. pp. XXIII & XXIV.  
 3. Ibid. p. XXIV.

accuse them; that the martyrs in England were not dying in defence of ceremonies, which they allow may be altered; and they gave the divines at Strasburg to understand that they had better stay away if they had no other desire than to reduce the Frankfort Church to King Edward's form.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly afterwards the Frankfort Church decided to "conclude upon some certaine order by common consent....and to have the holie Communion ministered". And it was agreed that the Order of Geneva should be used as being "moste godly and fardere off from superstition". Knox, one of their ministers, however, refused to comply with the decision until the divines at Strasburg, Zurich, etc. were acquainted. The other minister, Thomas Lever, proposed that they should carry on with a compromise - liturgy, "An order, as shulde be bothe Godly without respecte off the Booke of Geneva or anye other"<sup>2</sup>. The upshot was that Knox, Whittingham and others drew up in Latin a "platt off the whole booke of England", and sent it to Calvin for his judgment.<sup>3</sup> After deploring the contentions, Calvin in his reply said: "In the liturgie off Englande, I se that there were manye tollerable foolishe thinges, by these wordes I meane, that there was not that puritie whiche was to be desired. These vices, thoughe they coulde not at the

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1. Ibid. pp. XXIV-XXVI.

2. Ibid. p. XXVII.

3. Ibid. pp. XXVIII-XXXIV.

firste daie be amended, yet, seinge there was no manifeste impietie, they were for a season to be tollerated.....that it behoved the lerned, grave and godly ministers off Ohriste to enterprise farther, and to set foorth something more filed from ruste and purer. If godly Religion had flourished till this daie in England there oughte to have bin a thinge better corrected and manie thinges cleane taken away. Nowe, when theis princyples be over throwne, a church muste be set vp in another place, where ye maie freely make an order againe, whiche shall be apparent to the moste commoditious to the vse and edification off the church. I cannot tell what they meane whiche so greatly delite in the leawings off Popishe dregges. They love the thinges whereunto they are accustomed, etc".<sup>1</sup>

The result of this letter was that Knox, Whittingham, Gilby, Fox and Cole were given the task of drawing up a new "Order", and after their deliberations they submitted what was called the "Order of Geneva"<sup>2</sup>. The congregation, however, was divided in its opinion about accepting this 'Order', and, though Gilby humbly and with tears pleaded for unity and the acceptance of it, the Church rejected it and requested Knox, Whittingham, Parry and Leaver to devise a new Order - "some part taken forth of the Englishe books and other thinges put to, as the state of the church required".

1. Ibid. pp. XXXIV-XXXVI.

2. Ibid. p. XXXVI.

And this Order, taken on February 6th 1555, was to continue to the end of April the same year, and if any contention arose the matter was to be referred to Calvin, Musculus, Peter Martyr, Bullinger and Wyret.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately for the peace of the church, Dr Cox came from England on March 13th, and "answered" after the minister, as in the Anglican form. He was admonished, but persisted, and said he would do as he had done in England. The next Sunday one of Cox's party got up and read the Litany and his party responded in the usual way. Knox, however, in his Sermon, condemned the innovation. Among other things he said, "For as much as in the English Book there were things both superstitious, impure, and imperfect.... he would not consent that of that church it should be received, and that in case men would go about to burden that free congregation therewith, so oft as he should come in that place.... he would not fail to speak against it"<sup>2</sup> He further affirmed that among the many things which provoked God's anger against England, slackness to reform religion was one. And therefore it became them to be circumspect how they laid their foundations. And he mentioned the imperfections in England - "A want of discipline..... the troubles which Master Hooper sustained for the Rochet and such like, in the Booke commanded

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1. Ibid. p. XXXVII.

2. Vide. Ibid. pp. XXXVIII & XXXIX.

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and allowed. And that one man was permitted to have three, four or five benefices to the great slander of the gospel and defrauding of the flock of their lively food and sustenance"<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless Knox pleaded that Cox and his party should be allowed to become Members of the Church. But unfortunately Cox's party proved to be in the majority, and Cox forbade Knox to meddle any more with the Congregation.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Cox accused Knox before the Magistrates of treason because of his book, "An Adomition to Christians".<sup>3</sup> And Knox was banished on March 26th 1555.

The same day Whittingham was informed that the Church was to be handed over to Cox and his party, to whom "the magistrates at their suites had granted them the full vse off the Englishe booke commanding and charinge him therefore not to medle any more to the contrary. For---it was fullie concluded that so it should be".<sup>4</sup>

The original church, therefore, was broken up. Fox with a few followers went to Basle, and the rest to Geneva. At the latter place Knox and Christopher Goodman were appointed as pastors; Anthony Gilby acting for Knox until his return from France. They adopted the Genevan Order, which they

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1. Ibid p. XXXIX.

2. Ibid. p. XL.

3. Vide Introduction to the "Troubles" pp. XII & XIII

4. Ibid. p. XLV.



published later, February 10th, 1556, under the title, "The Service, discipline and form of Common Prayers and administration of the Sacraments used in the English Church at Geneva". "It must not be confounded", says Drysdale, "with Calvin's own service-book, which was also published in English from an early date, and was popular with the Puritan Party. With a few alterations this 'Book of Geneva' was adopted by the Reformed Church of Scotland in 1560, at the instigation of John Knox, and is usually known as "Knox's Psalms and Liturgy".<sup>1</sup> There seems little doubt that the Genevan Order adopted by the English settlers in that City was the same as that drawn up by Whittingham, Knox, Gilby, Fox and Cole, and submitted to, but rejected by, the Frankfort Church early in 1555<sup>2</sup>.

It will have been noticed that the Frankfort Church, in addition to holding similar sentiments to Hooper's with regard to vestments, claimed the right (a) to revise the Anglican Prayer-Book in the light of Scripture, or the usage of the Primitive Christian Church, which they regarded as the same thing: (b) to appoint its own ministers and to choose its own Order of Service; and (c) to impose discipline on its members. In other words it recognised no outside authority

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1: Drysdale: "History of Presbyterianism in England", pp. 82 & 83 and footnote p. 77

2: Vide supra, p.22

save the Scriptures and primitive usage. It was a self-contained church claiming power to decree its own organization. That it veered towards the Genevan practice was perhaps an accident due to its environment; that it ultimately accepted the Genevan model was due to its approval of the same as being nearest to its ideal - "moste godly and fardere off from superstition". Here surely was the nursery in which Presbyterian Puritanism of the following reign learnt its lessons and was nurtured to strength.

The troubles at Frankfort, however, did not end with the departure of these people to Basle and Geneva. In January 1557, two years after the first church was broken up, a matter arose which occasioned great contention, and led ultimately to the laying down of that principle which gave rise to Independency.

Thomas Ashley, a member of the church, had a grievance against the pastors and elders. (It is interesting to notice by the way that this new church which, through the influence of Dr Cox, had accepted the Edwardian Prayer-Book, nevertheless followed the Genevan Practice with regard to the ministry: Pastors and Elders elected by the Church). Ashley desired to bring his grievance before the church.<sup>1</sup> But the pastors Horne and Chambers, and the Elders objected to this procedure,

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1. "Troubles at Frankfort". pp. 62 ff.

and threatened to bring Ashley before the magistrates if he persisted. Accordingly, on January 24th, he handled his case before the Pastors and Elders, and requested that eight or ten neutral men should be appointed as adjudicators. This however, the Pastors and Elders refused, insisting on their authority over the Church, and threatening to deal severely with Ashley. A dispute thereupon arose in the church as to the pastors and elders being a party against Ashley, and the latter was commanded by the Church, that is, by the members of the Church as distinct from the Pastors and Elders, to plead his cause publicly before them. The Pastors and Elders, however, refused to debate the matter openly with Ashley before the church, and the Congregation, which had assembled for this purpose, was dismissed, as they thought, with contempt by the ministers.

Master Hales then summoned the church together to settle the matter, but the pastors and elders opposed this step. Later Chamber's, one of the ministers, pleaded in a sermon that they should all forgive each other. But the members of the Church replied that, while they were prepared to pardon all "private grudges", nevertheless the church would reserve unto itself the settlement of all public causes which belonged to the church and the liberty thereof.<sup>1</sup>

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1: Vide Ibid. p. LXXI.

Thereupon the church discussed the matter, and decreed that the Pastors and Elders were adversaries to Ashley, and, therefore, not fit and competent judges. And it was further agreed, that if the Pastors and Elders were required to be present at an assembly, and would not come, that the Assembly was lawful notwithstanding their absence; and that those things which such an assembly decreed, should be had and esteemed as a lawful decree.<sup>1</sup>

The Pastors and Elders thereupon threatened to resign, since they had but a show of power and no real authority. And they did refuse to take their accustomed places in the Church. Nevertheless the Church insisted on its rights, and determined that its "discipline" should be altered so as to incorporate this fact.<sup>2</sup> And it was affirmed that the Church was above the Pastor and not the Pastor above the church.<sup>3</sup>

Horne and Chambers with others left the Church and joined the local French or German Churches. And the magistrate, John Glanburge, exhorted the Church to amend its discipline (polity) while it was without ministers.<sup>4</sup> Naturally, Horne and Chambers were opposed to this step, but they were appointed on the Committee that should make the alteration. But they never attended its meetings, and they opposed the

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1: Ibid. p. LXXII.  
 2: Ibid. pp. LXIII-LXXVI.  
 3: Ibid. p. LXXVII.  
 4. Ibid. vide letter. p.CX.

acceptance of the change in polity.<sup>1</sup>

The discipline, however, was amended, and it read,  
 "The congregation thus assembled is a particular visible  
 churche suche as may be in divers places off the worlde verie  
 manie. And all these particular churches joined together....  
 by the conjunction of true doctrine and faith.....do make  
 one churche in the worlde, and the electe off God that be in  
 the whole churche and every parte thereof with all the elect  
 that hath bin from the beginnunge off the worlde and shall be  
 to the ende thereof doo altogether make the Holy Catholike  
 and Apostolic Church....."<sup>2</sup>

Secondly; "The signes and notes of a visible churche are thies;

- a. True and godly doctrine.
- b. Right ministration and vse off the Sacraments  
and Common-praier.
- c. Honest and godly life, yff not in the whole  
multitude, yet in manie off them.
- d. Discipline, that is the correction of vices.

And they declared that "the two first notes are suche as with-  
 out the whiche no forme of anie godly visible Church can  
 possibly be".<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly, with regard to the second prayer-book of  
 Edward, they said; "Whereoff notwithstanding in the respecte off  
 times and places and other circumstances certaine rites and

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1: Ibid. pp. XC-CX  
 2: Ibid. p. CXV.  
 3: Ibid. p. CXVI.

ceremonies appoynted in the saied Booke, as thinges in different, maie be left owte, as we at this present doo".<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the ministry, they decreed that there should be two ministers of equal standing and authority.<sup>2</sup> Horne and Chambers, with their followers<sup>3</sup>, pleaded for one minister of supreme authority, and quoted the decree of the Nicene Council, that one Bishop be appointed in every city for the sake of good order.<sup>4</sup>

But the Church carried its point of having two ministers of equal standing, and six elders. And it said of them, they "shall be revered, in all thinges godly and reasonable obeyed and revered of all persons in the congregation under paine off moste sharpe discipline - Provided alwaies that the saied ministers and seniors, severally and joyntly, shall have no authoritie to make anye manner of decrees or ordinances to bynd the congregation or anie member thereof: but shall execute such ordinances and decrees as shal be made by the Congregation and to them delivered<sup>5</sup>. Moreover Deacons, Seniors and Ministers are to be elected by the Congregation annually<sup>6</sup>. And the Authority of the Congregation over the

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1: Ibid. p. CXVII.

2: Ibid. p. CXVII.

3: For names of these, vide Ibid. p. CLXVII f.

4: Vide Ibid. p. CXXXVI. f.

5: Ibid. p. CXXV.

6: Ibid. p. CXXV.

ministers and seniors was further emphasised by the decree that if dissention arose between the ministers and seniors, or between them and the congregation, and the ministers and seniors will not assemble the congregation to settle the matter, then the Congregation has power to come together and to consult and determine concerning the controversy.<sup>1</sup>

If this wasn't a Congregational or Independent Church, it was very like one. In its amended discipline it speaks of itself as "A particular visible church", and it claims autonomy to make alterations in the Edwardian prayer-book, which it happened to use, to suit its own requirements. And on the matter of the final authority in the Church - pastors and seniors or the members of the Church - it declared with no uncertain voice for the latter, which is a fundamental principle of Congregationalism. We do not claim, however, that this was a Congregational Church, but we do claim that some of the principles that gave rise in the following reign to separatism, which gradually developed into Congregationalism or Independency, were present in germ in this Frankfort Church. In reality the church was in a fluid state: it was still in the melting pot<sup>1</sup>. And it did not continue long enough there

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1: Ibid. p. CXXVI.

2: Op. it's Anglicanism - the Edwardian Prayer Book: its Presbyterianism - Ministers & Seniors; its Independency - the question of final authority in the Church resting with the Church members and not with Ministers & Seniors.

to assume its final and definite shape: for on Elizabeth's accession to the throne in 1558, its members returned to England and were henceforth separated.

There is, however, a letter from this church, in reply to one sent from Geneva, which reveals a curious mentality, in view of what we already know of this church while at Frankfort.

On the death of Mary the English Church at Geneva sent a letter of greeting and good will to the Churches at Frankfort, Arrow, Basle, Strasburg and Worms<sup>1</sup>. "For so much as there has byn jarres", they wrote, "between them and other churches, about the Booke of Common Praier and ceremonies, it was now expedient and necessary not onely that unfained reconciliation shulde be betweene them, but also that they might so joine together in matters of religion and ceremonies, etc", so that papists and other enemies might not take advantage of their dissensions when they returned to England. Frankford replied<sup>2</sup> in effect that there were not more than four persons at Frankfort who were present before the Genevan brethren left that city; that they had no contention with them before, and they don't wish to have now or hereafter: but they go on to say that it would be to no purpose to contend over ceremonies, since it will lie with neither to determine what ceremonies

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1. Ibid. p. CLXXXVI.

2: Ibid. pp. CLXXXIX - CXC



shall be used, but with parliament. As for themselves, they intend to submit to the "Orders" established by Authority, and they desire the Genevan Church to do the same, so long as they are not "wicked orders". "For" they said, "whereas all the reformed churches differ among themselves in diverse ceremonies, and yet agree in the unity of doctrine; we see no inconvenience if we use some ceremonies different from them, so that we agree in the chief points of our religion". Nevertheless they affirmed that if any ceremonies were offensive, they would join with the Genevan Church for the "reformation and abolishing of the same".

In view of the Frankfort Church's uncompromising attitude to authority, and its departure from the Edwardian liturgy and orders, is it not a little strange that it should assume such a submissive attitude to the authority which it evidently expected would be exercised in England? But there is no doubt that these exiles were looking to England as to a land of promise. As changes had been made in the prayer-book in Edward's reign to bring it more into accord with the religious opinions of the age; and as further changes had been made in the prayer-book, and in "Orders" during their sojourn on the Continent, so on the return of the eager Protestants to England, changes consonant with their ideals and aspirations would surely be made. They never expected this rigid system

which was finally imposed. Nevertheless, while they were prepared to accept ceremonies which might be different from those used in the rest of the reformed churches, they were not prepared to compromise on things that mattered.

"Wicked Orders" they would not accept, but would fight for the "reformation and abolishing of the same". And alas! they had to.

In outlining the "troubles" at Frankfort our purpose has been to bring into prominence the conflicting opinions of different groups of men who, we have reason to believe, were seriously minded and conscientious, and who were seeking for the ideal church, or the church which was in accord with the New Testament. And we have done this in order that we may understand something of the mental and spiritual attitude of those divines who, finding themselves confronted by Elizabethan Anglicanism, had no other alternative than to rebel or to stifle the voice of conscience. And because they chose the former alternative they were dubbed with the "odious name of Puritans".

Paget, commenting on Fuller's statement that "Puritanism was conceived in the days of King Edward; born in the reign of Queen Mary (but beyond sea at Frankfort); nursed and weaned in the reign of Queen Elizabeth", says, "It was a very lusty and hopeful infant that was brought from the lands of

its birth and exile when Elizabeth came to the throne".<sup>1</sup>  
And so it was.

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1. Paget. "Introduction to Hooker's Ecclesiastical  
Polity, Book V." p.14.

## CHAPTER ONE.

### ELIZABETHAN PURITANISM.

The religious problem which confronted Elizabeth when she came to the throne in 1558 undoubtedly bristles with difficulties. On the one hand the exiled Protestants were returning from the Continent with high expectation for the reformed faith, and with deeper convictions and greater zeal. On the other hand, Romanists had just emerged from a period of ascendancy in church and state, and the bishops and Queen's councillors were still Romanists, and not only was every parish church served by a Roman priest, but, says J. R. Green, "the older and wealthier gentry were on the conservative side, and only the younger and meaner on the other".<sup>1</sup>

But whatever the Queen's preference might have been, when she met her first parliament in January, 1559, she found it decidedly protestant. One of its first measures was to introduce a bill restoring to the Queen the title of "Supreme Head of the Church". Opposition was met with from the Catholic members, and the Bishops in the house of Lords, says Froude, used "language that was indecently passionate".<sup>2</sup> But the bill became law on April 29th and was entitled "An Act restoring

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1: J.R. Green "History of England" (Illustrated Edition) Vol.II  
 2: Froude, "History of England" (1866) p.748  
       Vol. VII. p. 53

to the Crown the ancient jurisdiction over the State Ecclesiastical and Spiritual and abolishing foreign power repugnant to the same".<sup>1</sup>

Among other things this Act empowered the Queen "to visit, reform, redress, order, correct and amend, all such Errors, Heresies, Schisms, Abuses, Offences, Contempts and Enormities whatsoever which by any Manner of Spiritual or Ecclesiastical Power, Authority or Jurisdiction, can or may lawfully be reformed, ordered, redressed, corrected, restrained or amended to the Pleasure of Almighty God, the Increase of Virtue, and the Conservation of the Peace and Unity of this Realm".<sup>2</sup>

Parliament then addressed itself to the 'Order of Service' to be observed in the Church. It was perhaps natural, and certainly it was the easiest way out of the difficulty, to accept the Edwardian Prayer-Book, as this was ready to hand. But why pains should have been taken to revise the 1552 Edition, and incorporate in the Communion Order the 1549 Edition<sup>3</sup>, thus making it less definitely Protestant and more vaguely Catholic, rather than revising it, if revision seemed

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1: 1. Elizabeth Cap. 1 (Statutes at Large" Ed. John Raithby, (1811) Vol: IV. p. 109 f.)

2: I. Elizabeth Cap. I. Sect. XVIII (Statutes at Large Vol. IV. p. 112)

3: Vide Brightman, "The English Rite" Vol. I. p. CLXIX f and p. 130 to end of Vol. II for comparison of texts.

necessary, to bring it into line with the Protestant revisions made by the exiles on the Continent, is difficult to account for except on the assumption that it was thought desirable to compromise between Protestant and Catholic opinion. The rubrick in the 1552 Edition, which declared, that by kneeling at the Sacrament no adoration was intended to any corporeal Presence of Christ, was struck out. And from the Litany was omitted the Prayer: "From the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities, good Lord deliver us". It was certainly not a beautiful petition, but the point is, was it omitted for moral and aesthetic reasons, or for fear of offending Romanists? In view of the many changes made in the Elizabethan prayer-book it does seem, as Froude says, that the intention was "so to frame its formulas that they might be patient of a Catholic or Protestant interpretation, according to the views of this or that sect of people; .....that it should contain ambiguous phrases..... and thus enable Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and Zwinglian to insist each that the Church of England was theirs".<sup>1</sup>

This amended prayer-book, and an Act of Uniformity enforcing its use, passed its three readings in three successive days.<sup>2</sup> Any clergyman who did not use this book, or who

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1: Froude, "History of England" (1866) Vol.VII. p.81  
 2: I. Elizabeth Cap. 2 (Statutes at Large p. 117 f) Vide Prothero "Statutes" pp. 13-20 for A/c of Act of Uniformity.

spoke against it, was to be fined, for the first offence, a year's value of his living, and was liable to six month's imprisonment. For a second offence, his living was forfeited and he was to be imprisoned for twelve months. And a third offence subjected him to imprisonment for life. A layman who spoke against the book was also liable to heavy punishment, and every absentee from public worship was to be fined one shilling.<sup>1</sup>

Following on this came the establishing of the Court of High Commission<sup>2</sup> - the English Inquisition - whose business it was to see that uniformity in religion was observed or to assess the penalty.

A visitation of the churches was also decided upon.<sup>3</sup> This was to be undertaken by the Lord-Lieutenant of each county, assisted by other gentlemen, and by legal and theological experts; and they had a body of instructions known as the Queen's Injunctions<sup>4</sup>. These required that the clergy should observe the Queen's supremacy, and should preach at least four times a year against all "usurped and foreign power"; that they should discourage images and relics; should preach in their cure at least once a month; should

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- 1: Ibid. Chap. 2 Sects. IV-XIV (Statutes at Large, pp. 118-120)  
 2: Vide G.W. Prothero, "Select Statutes (1894) pp. 227-241.  
 3: Vide Prothero "Statutes" pp. 227-235: for powers of the High Commission A.D. 1539-1562  
 4: Vide "Prothero" "Select Statutes", pp. 184-190.

decry pilgrimages and all superstition as practised in Roman churches: should recite on holy-days the Paternoster, the Creed and the Ten Commandments, in English, if they have no sermon; should provide within three months a "Bible of the largest volume in English: and within one twelve months..... the Paraphrases of Erasmus also in English upon the Gospels". They must admit no man to preach unless licenced; must report of any man who hinders the reading of the scriptures in English, or is "a fautor of any usurped or foreign power". Non-residents must give a fortieth of such income for the poor, and all parsons shall give £3. 6. 8 for every £100 income for the maintenance of a student at the University. Processions in Church-yards were forbidden: the people were to be encouraged to come to church on holy-days, though in the time of harvest, they may work after service.

"All shrines....paintings, and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry and superstition" must be removed from walls and windows in churches and homes. All who buy benefices are to be deprived. Because of the lack of preachers parsons must read "Every Sunday one of the homilies set forth....by the Queen's authority". Clerical marriages must be sanctioned by "the bishop of the diocese and two justices of the peace of the same shire". And "all that may be called or admitted to preaching or ministry of the sacraments, or that be admitted into vocation ecclesiastical,



or into any society of learning in either of the Universities or elsewhere, shall use and wear such seemly habits, garments, and such square caps, as were most commonly and orderly received in the latter years of the reign of Kind Edward the Sixth". Thus, as the Frankfort Church had anticipated<sup>1</sup>, the reformers were not consulted on the settlement of religion in England. Considering the diversity of opinions displayed on the Continent, perhaps it was wise that the settlement was not left to them. But in the interests of peace in the church it might have been a wiser step to have consulted their wishes and sought for a compromise. But the Queen and her Council, who were responsible for the settlement, either did not understand the mentality of the divines for whom they were legislating, or they ignored it, believing that a measure of compulsion would reduce them to obedience. And it was the kind of settlement that was made, together with the uncompromising attitude of the Queen, who would not tolerate any deviation from the straight path which had been marked out, which provoked the strife and contention of the Puritans.

That a great number of the Protestant clergy were not happy about the religious settlement became immediately apparent. Since the Marian Bishops, with the exception of Kitchen of Llandaff, refused to take the oath of supremacy

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1: Vide Supra p.p 39-40

when summoned before the queen for that purpose in May 1559<sup>1</sup>, it became necessary, they being deposed, to fill the vacant sees with Protestants. But it was no easy task to find men who were willing to accept office under the new regime. Several men definitely refused the offer of a bishopric<sup>2</sup>, and the ground of their objection was the insistence on vestments and ritual. And those who did submit to consecration - Parker, Grindal, Parkhurst, Sandys and Pilkington - did so in the hope that as time went on a fuller reformation, more consonant with their ideals, might be achieved.<sup>3</sup>

Among the lower ranks of clergy there was widespread disobedience and non-conformity. Some of this was due to Romanists who had half-heartedly embraced Anglicanism for their own ends: but much was due to the kind of men we have seen at Frankfort and Geneva, who conscientiously could not conform to the requirements of Anglicanism. In 1561, reports of the lack of uniformity reached the queen, and she commanded Parker to bring things to order.<sup>4</sup> The Archbishop thereupon issued the "Interpretations and

1: Vide Strype 'Annals' (1824) Vol. I. pp 204-206.

2: Whitehead, Bernard Gilpin, Miles Coverdale, John Knox, Thomas Sampson.

3: Vide Neal, "History of the Puritans", Vol. I. p. 122,

4: Strype. "Parker" (Ed. 1821) Vol. I. p. 214.

"Considerations", in which detailed instructions were given with regard to apparel, the position of the Communion Table, and other matters of ritual. Eleven articles of religion, to be held and taught by the clergy, accompanied the "Interpretations and Considerations", and these were to be publicly confessed by the minister on his appointment to a benefice, and subsequently twice a year.<sup>1</sup>

Greater uniformity does not seem to have resulted from Parker's efforts. For on February 14th, 1564, Secretary Cecil reported to the Queen a sorry state of affairs. He writes, "Some say the service and prayers in the Chancel; others in the body of the church. Some say the same in a seat made in the church; some in the pulpit, with their faces to the people. Some keep precisely the order of the book; some intermeddle Psalms in metre. Some say with a surplice; others without a surplice. The table stands in the body of the church in some places; in others it standeth in the chancel. In some places the table standeth altar-wise, distant from the wall (a) yard. In some others in the middle of the Chancel, north and south. In some places the table is joined; in others it standeth upon tressels. In some the table hath a carpet; in others it hath none. Some (administer the Communion) with surplice and cap; some with surplice alone; others with none.

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1: Strype, "Annals" (Ed. 1824) Vol. I. pp. 318-329.

Some with chalice, some with a Communion Cup; others with a common cup; some with unleavened bread and some with leavened. Some receive kneeling, others standing, others sitting; some baptize in a font, some in a basin. Some sign with the Sign of the Cross; others sign not. Some minister in a surplice, others without. Some with a square cap; some with a round cap; some with a button cap, some with a hat; some in scholar's cloathes, some in others".<sup>1</sup>

Parker was again commanded to bring order into the church, and in March 1564, a new book of Articles was drawn up under the title of a "Book of Advertisements partly for due order in the public administration of Common Prayers and using the holy Sacraments, and partly for the apparel of all persons ecclesiastical".<sup>2</sup> The object of the Advertisements was stated to be that "All her (majesty's) loving subjects.... be knit together in one perfect unity of doctrine and..... conjoined in one uniformity of rites and manners"<sup>3</sup>. To achieve this, all licenses to preach in the province of Canterbury, bearing a date prior to March 1st 1564, were to be "void and of none effect". But "All such as shall be

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1: Strype, "Parker" (1821) Vol. I. pp. 301-302.

2: Vide Prothero "Select Statutes" pp. 191-194, also Strype "Parker" Vol. III. pp. 84-93

3: Prothero. Ibid. p. 192. (The A-rticles were not issued till 1566).



thought meet for the office are to be admitted again without difficulty or charge....." . Those not licenced to preach must confine themselves to reading homilies - "gravely and aptly, without any glosing of the same or any additions". At the Communion in cathedrals and collegiate churches the minister must wear a "cope, with gospeller and epistoler agreeably"; when saying prayers at the Communion Table he must use no cope, but a surplice. Deans and prebendaries must wear a surplice with a silk hood when sitting among the choir. Other ministers of lower rank have to wear "a comely surplice with sleeves". The Communion table must stand on a frame, to distinguish it from an altar. And all Communicants shall receive the sacrament kneeling. An attempt was also made to secure worthy and able ministers by prohibiting all except graduates to sue for orders except in the diocese in which they were born or had lived for some time. Evidently this was intended to preclude men whose character was not well known. And all ministers must be examined by the ordinary before admission to a church, and they were forbidden to remove to another sphere without the testimony of the diocesan from whence they came. All ministers, however, must wear the cap prescribed.

Lastly, all who accepted livings must subscribe to the following :-

"I shall not preach or publicly interpret, but only

read that which is appointed by public authority, without special licence of the bishop under his seal".

"I shall use sobriety in apparel, and specially in church at Common Prayers, according to order appointed".

"I do also faithfully promise....to observe...such order and uniformity in all external policy, rites, and ceremonies of the Church as by the laws, good usages and orders are already well provided and established".

In addition to this Parker summoned the clergy of London and Southwark before the Ecclesiastical Commissioners at Lambeth on March 26th 1566, and demanded immediate obedience. When the ministers appeared in court, a clergyman, Mr Thomas Cole, who was attired in the prescribed vestments, was placed beside the Commissioners, and the Bishop's chancellor said to them, "My Masters, and ye ministers of London, the Council's pleasure is that strictly ye keep the unity of apparel, like this man who stands here canonically habited with a square cap, a scholar's gown priest-like, a tippet; and in the church a linen surplice. Ye that will subscribe write "Volo"; those that will not subscribe write 'Nolo"; be brief, make no words".<sup>1</sup>

This marks the beginning of the persecution of the ultra-protestants, and according to Fuller<sup>2</sup>, it was at this

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1: Neal "Puritans" Vol. I. p. 173.

2: Fuller, "Church History of Britain", Bk. IX. Sect. 1  
66-67.

time that the name Puritans, was first applied to non-comformists. "The English Bishops", he says, "conceiving themselves impowered by their Canons, began to shew their authority in urging the Clergy of their Diocese to subscribe to the Liturgie, Ceremonies, and Discipline of the church, and such as refused the same were branded with the odious name of Puritans". And he goes on to say that it is "A name which in this notion first began in this year (1564)<sup>1</sup> and the grief had not been great, if it had ended in the same".

From Cecil's letter and Parker's Advertisements - the latter being an attempt to rectify the disorder revealed in the former - it would appear that the chief ground of the Puritans' nonconformity at this time was the prescribed ritual, and that their strongest objection was to the vestments. And, indeed, since the first Convocation of Elizabeth's reign, in 1563, ritual in general, and vestments in particular, had been the *bête noire* to the reformers. The lower house of that convocation only failed to carry its proposals for reform by the slender margin of one vote - 58 for: 59 against. And while it raised no objection to the Prayer-Book itself, but proposed

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1: The date is probably wrong, as the Advertisements were not published till the year 1566 - Vide Strype, "Parker" Vol. I. p. 432.

"That in all parish churches the minister in Common Prayer turn his face toward the people, and there distinctly read the divine service appointed, where all the people assembled may hear and be edified", nevertheless it would have modified some of the ritual connected with it. For it proposed "That in ministering the sacrament of baptism the ceremony of making the Cross in the child's forehead may be omitted, as tending to superstition": that, forasmuch as divers communicants are not able to kneel during the time of Communion for age, sickness and sundry other infirmities, and some also superstitiously both kneel and knock, that order of kneeling to be left to the discretion of the ordinary within his jurisdiction: that it be sufficient for the minister, in time of saying divine service and ministering the sacraments, to use a surplice, and that no minister say service or minister the Sacraments but in a comely garment or habit; that the use of organs be removed".<sup>1</sup>

It might seem from the above that this Convocation was in favour of vestments. But the Proposal that "it be sufficient for the minister, in time of saying divine service.....to use a surplice", was but another

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1: Vide Strype "Annals" (1824) Vol. I. pp 500-501.



instance of half a loaf being better than none. It was a compromise - the reformers being prepared to wear the surplice in church, if they might dispense with the outdoor or "walking-habit". But they had no love for the surplice.

According to Neal, "not one of the first Bishops after the reformation approved of the habits, or argued for their continuance from scripture, antiquity or decency, but submitted to them out of necessity and to keep the church in the queen's favour".<sup>1</sup> It was so in Parker's case. He "gloried in having been consecrated without the Aaronical garments", but he submitted to the Anglican requirements later because of "his concern for his Queen's honour..... that her royal will might take place"<sup>2</sup>. And that was the motive, no doubt, of many who conformed, because it was, in a sense, the motive urged upon them by some of the greatest continental reformers. As Peter Martyr had urged Hooper to wear the habits, since they were secondary matters, so he wrote in a similar strain to Grindal: "As for the habits to be used in the ministry of holy things.....though he was always against the use of such ornaments, yet he saw the present danger, lest they should be

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1: Neal "History of the Puritans" (1822: Vol. I. p. 160  
 2: Ibid. p. 158.

put from the office of preaching: and that perhaps some hope might be, that as altars and images were already taken away, so also these appearances of the mass might in time be taken away too, if he and others who had taken upon them Episcopacy earnestly laboured therein."<sup>1</sup>

Bullinger was also of the same opinion. Laurence Humphrey, president of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Thomas Sampson, dean of Christ Church, had correspondence with him on this subject<sup>2</sup>. To them vestments were the "accompaniments of that which all godly persons now abominated"<sup>3</sup>. But Bullinger advised them to adopt the habits rather than be deposed for such secondary matters.<sup>4</sup>

Not all the reformers in England, however, were prepared to take this view. Many did, including most of the first bishops. But, as Neal says,<sup>5</sup> there were those who believed that if they did not reject the habits at first, they would never obtain their removal afterwards. Humphrey and Sampson were of this opinion, in spite of Bullinger's advice. And in their correspondence with Parker about their nonconformity, they wrote that "Conscience is a tender thing, and all men cannot look upon the same

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1: Strype, "Grindal", p.43  
 2: Zurich Letters (Ed. H. Robinson) First Series pp 133-134;  
 3: Ibid, p. 158. 157-163:  
 4: Ibid, pp. 345-355.  
 5: "History of Puritans", Vol. I. p.161.

things as indifferent: if therefore these habits seem so to you, you are not to be condemned by us; on the other hand, if they do not appear so to us, we ought not to be vexed by you."<sup>1</sup> They were summoned before the Ecclesiastical Commission on two occasions in 1565, and Strype gives an account of their bold stand for their ideals.<sup>2</sup> They refused to surrender and were deprived.

This dissatisfaction with vestments was fairly general at this period. At Cambridge University the disliking of the habits was manifested in no uncertain way. At Trinity College at the instigation of Thomas Cartwright, Fellow of Trinity, all except three declared against the surplice. And at St. John's College, when the Master, Dr Longworth, was absent, three hundred students came to chapel on feast-day without hoods and surplices, and continued to do so, even with the master's knowledge, until Dr Longworth was summoned before the High Commission and obliged to sign a recantation.<sup>3</sup>

A copy of a letter<sup>4</sup> sent to the Bishops and pastors of England by the Superintendent Ministers and Commissioners of Scotland, dated from Edinburgh, December 28th, 1566, reveals

1: "Hist. of Puritans", Vol. I. p. 169

2: "Parker", Vol. I. pp 322 f: 329 f.

3: Vide Strype, "Life of Parker", I. pp. 390 f, & Vol. III pp 125, 135.

4: Vide "Troubles at Frankfort" (J. Petheram 1846) pp. 212-214.

the reason of the disliking of the habits by the Extreme Protestants. The letter speaks of vestments as "such garmentes as Idolatres in time of blindes have vset in their Idolatrie". And as "Romishe ragges". And it goes on to say: "Iff surplese, corner capp, and tippet have byn badges off ydolatres in the verie acte off their ydolatrie, what have the preachers off Christian libertie and the open rebuker off all superstition to doe with the dregges off the romishe beast?"<sup>1</sup> Another letter in the same work<sup>2</sup> dated October 24th 1567, which is the answer sent from Gevena to certain brethren of the Church of England, to questions concerning Ecclesiastical matters, has also something to say about the prescribed vestments. With regard to "wearing of copes and garments.....as well for the common vse, as for the ministerie", the writers allow badges of function to be right and proper, but "not euerie marke and note is straight way to be vsed". "Put the case", they say, "that the ministers were commaunded to weare the pied coate off a foole or the garmente off a vice in a plaie, were it not manifeste skorninge off the ministerie so to do?" Yet ministers who wear habits seem to them "to trespasse

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1: Another letter re Vestments was sent by Gualter of Tigurin in 1566 and is attached to the 2nd Edition of the Admonition, Vide Frere & Douglas "Puritan Manifestos", pp 41-43.

2: "Troubles at Frankfort", pp. 200-211.

somewhat worse then so, bicause that the lorde hathe not only reared and set vs this priestlike apparell as a toie to be laughe at euen off the Papistes themselves: but it is also certeine, that the same is poluted and defiled with infinite superstition".<sup>1</sup> And in answer to those who

plead that the vestments "are old", they say that Apostolic simplicity is a great deal more ancient. And to the argument that vestments are indifferent, they answer that

(a) they were used to superstition with papists.

(b) they offend those who detest superstition.

(c) they belong to those who are the sworn enemies of sound doctrine.

(d) they are indifferent only to papistical sympathizers who welcome habits because they will help to bring back Romanism.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless the letter advises them to bear with the apparel rather than give up their charge, and to press for their being taken away.<sup>3</sup> But under certain conditions vestments are not to be tolerated. "But againe yff that the Ministers be commaunded not onlie to tollerate theis thinges, but also that they shall withe their subscriptions allowe them as lawful, or ells by their stillnes foster them: what can we ells

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1: Ibid. p. 203  
 2: Ibid. p. 204  
 3: Ibid. p. 205

persuade them to doo but that having witnessed their innocencie and in the feare off the lorde tried all means, they shulde geue over their functions to open wronge. But oure hartes betide us off Englande muche better thinges than theis extremities".<sup>1</sup>

Whether the English Puritans needed the advice of their neighbours in the reformed churches abroad, or whether they had learned their lesson in the continental school during the Marian Exile, their ideas largely coincided with the attitude of these letters, as can be seen from the paper handed in at Lambeth by the deprived ministers in 1566, and entitled: "Reasons grounded upon the Scriptures, whereby we are persuaded not to admit of the use of outward apparel, and ministering garments of the Pope's church".<sup>2</sup>

From 1566, when Parker's "Advertisements", and the machinery put into operation to secure conformity to them, or deprivation, made it evident that reform was not to be easily achieved, a new policy and a new method of attack became apparent.

Since the Bishops were largely of the same mind as Parker, and bent on uniformity, there was little hope of carrying any measures of reform in Convocation. Defeated by merely one vote in 1563, was not, as it might appear, an encouragement

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1: Ibid. p. 206.

2: Vide Neal, "History of the Puritans" Vol. I. pp 174-176 (footnote).

to press for reform with the hope of victory in 1566. For during the intervening years the idea of uniformity had been indelibly fixed on the minds of the Bishops by the stern attitude of the Queen. The new method of attack, adopted by the Puritans, was, therefore, to appeal to parliament itself. This procedure was, of course, unconstitutional, since it ignored both Convocation, which was the representative assembly of the church, and ought not only to be consulted with regard to any changes in religion, but to agree upon such changes, before the sanction of parliament was sought; and it ignored the Queen who, as the constitutional head of the Church, ought to be consulted and approve of any measures ere they were submitted to parliament. It was, therefore, a bold and unconstitutional move on the part of the Puritans, and was undertaken no doubt out of sheer desperation. Naturally it met with her Majesty's opposition and stern rebuke.

The Puritan sympathies of many members of the House no doubt encouraged this new policy. But for the Queen it is evident that reforms along puritan lines would have been made.

In the Parliament of 1566, six matters altogether were put forward in Bills. D'Ewes<sup>1</sup> sums them up thus:

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1: D'Ewes, "Journals", pp. 184-185.

- A. A Bill for the Confirmation of the 39 Articles.
- B. " " for the Order of Ministers.
- C. " " for the residence of Pastors.
- D. " " to avoid corrupt presentations to livings.
- E. " " for leases of Benefices.
- F. " " for Pensions out of Benefices.

It would seem that an attempt to give Civil Status to the Articles of Religion was the chief matter preferred; and though the Bill passed the third reading in the Commons and the first reading in the Lords, it was held up by the Queen.<sup>1</sup>

In 1571 the whole of the above Bills were again presented, but her majesty again vetoed them, and said "that she approved their (parliament's) good endeavours, but would not suffer these things to be ordered by parliament".<sup>2</sup> It was in this parliament that Mr Strickland and Mr Norton moved that a conference should be held between a committee of the Lords and Commons, with the object of a further reformation of religion, and Norton produced the matters to be considered under the title "Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum".<sup>3</sup>

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1: Vide: "Parker Correspondence" (Parker Society) pp.  
 2: D'Ewes "Journals", p. 185 290-294.  
 3: Ibid. pp. 156-158.



Committees were appointed, and on April 14th, a Bill for the "Reformation of the Book of Common Prayer" was read a first time. Strickland sponsored the Bill, and it was decided to ask the Queen "for her licence and privy to proceed in this Bill".<sup>1</sup> The Queen's attitude we have just noticed. And Strickland for his pains was cited before the Council and suspended.<sup>2</sup> In the following year, 1572, a Bill<sup>3</sup> to legalise puritan non-conformity was introduced. It requested that freedom might be used in the prayers of the Service-Book, that ministers might follow the lead of the best reformed churches, and that the Act of Uniformity should apply to Papists only. The Bill found a good deal of sympathy in the Commons, but as on previous occasions her majesty vetoed it on May 22nd. The Speaker announced that "her Highnesses Pleasure is that from henceforth no Bills concerning Religion shall be preferred into this House, unless the same should be first considered and liked by the Clergy. And further, that her Majesty's Pleasure is to see the two last Bills read in this House touching Rites and Ceremonies. It is ordered by the House that the

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1: Ibid. pp. 166-167.

2: Ibid. pp. 168-169.

3: Ibid. p. 212. This Bill is reprinted in "Puritan Manifestoes" (Frere & Douglas), App. I. p. 149.

same Bills shall be delivered unto her Majesty<sup>1</sup> . . . ."

After seeing the Bills the Queen informed the House that "she liked very well of them and was minded to publish them and have them executed by the bishops by direction of Her Highnesses legal authority of Supremacy of the Church of England, and not to have the same dealt in by parliament".<sup>2</sup>

Sir Peter Wentworth who had strongly supported the Bills in the House, and made a great oration in favour of freedom of speech and freedom of dealing with religious affairs, condemning the Queen's attempt to muzzle the Common, was like Strickland in the previous year, suspended and committed to the Tower.<sup>3</sup>

Before this Parliament ended, however, there appeared the "Admonition to Parliament". There seems no ground for believing that it was presented to the House. Perhaps that was not the intention of the authors. Its form as well as its wide circulation<sup>4</sup> through the country, suggest that it was an "open letter", intended to influence public opinion on behalf of the puritan ideals. However, it was drawn up as a petition, and addressed to Parliament.

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1: D'Ewes. p. 213

2: D'Ewes, "Journals", p. 213

3: Ibid, pp. 236 f.

4: Vide "Parker Correspondence". p. 397.

What chiefly concerns us here are the new demands put forward by the Puritans. No longer do they make vestments and ritual the ground of their opposition to Anglicanism. Had liberty been granted in these things, they would still have been dissatisfied. The Admonition reveals that they desired an absolute change in the whole polity of the Church. What they wanted was the substitution of something like the Genevan order in place of Episcopacy.

This is not to be marvelled at, when we remember the history of the first Frankfort Church and its ultimate removal to Geneva, and its acceptance of the Genevan polity. The ideals that found expression in the Admonition, and were to be more lucidly set forth in the second Admonition must have been present in the minds of many Puritans when the objections to Anglicanism were made to appear as merely matters of ritual.

In the letter from Geneva, dated October 24th 1567, to which we have already referred,<sup>1</sup> mention is made of several matters which reveal that the Puritans were then considerably agitated by the unlikeness of Episcopacy to Presbyterianism. They had evidently asked for advice about Ordination; complaining of "the multitude whiche sue for order"

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1: Vide supra p. 59.

and are "enrolled in the ministerie dothe withoute the voices off elders, and also (with) no certeine cure appointed them, but lightly examined off their limes and behaviur to whom also, at the luste of the Bishoppe - - libertie be geuen - - to preache the worde off God for a time prescribed, otherwise to rehearse only the churche service". To which Geneva answered that it was "altogether unlawful" by the word of God and the Canons, and that "iff the case were oures we woulde not receive the ministerie uppon theis conditions iff it were profered"<sup>1</sup>.

Questions had also been asked about "Discipline" - the "Kaies off bindinge and losinge practised in certeine courtes off the Bishops".<sup>2</sup> And the answer returned was to the effect that discipline appertained to the whole eldership until the time of the Popes, and that the people were not "rashly shut out" - i.e. excommunicated. And they urged that "Eldershippe and Deacons maie be restored and set upp according to the worde off God and cannons off the pure churche, whiche thinge, yff it be not done, verelie", they say, "we are sore afraide that this onely thinge will be the beginninge off manie calamities- - - " And they exhorted the English reformers to "rather suffer anie kinde off trouble than to do herin against their consciences".<sup>3</sup>

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1: "Troubles at Frankfort" (Ed. J. Petherham 1846) pp 200-201  
 2: Ibid p. 208  
 3: Ibid. p. 209

What brought this larger question of polity to the forefront in the Puritan propaganda may have been the boldness of Thomas Cartwright, Fellow of Trinity, Cambridge, who in 1570 laid down his Thesis in six Latin Articles.<sup>1</sup> He maintained that

- I. Archiepiscoporum et archidiaconorum nomina simul cum muneribus et officiis suis sunt abolenda.
- II. Legitimorum in Ecclesia ministrorum nomina, qualia sunt Episcoporum et diaconorum, separata a suis muneribus in verbe Dei descriptis, similiter sunt improbanda et ad institutionem Apostolicam revocanda; ut Episcopus in verbo et praeiis, diaconus in pauperibus curandis versetur.
- III. Episcoporum cancellariis aut archidiaconorum officialibus regimen ecclesiae non est committendum, sed ad idoneum ministrum Et Presbyterium Ejusdem ecclesiae deferendum.
- IV. Non oportet ministerium esse vagum et liberum, sed quisque debet certo cuidam gregi addici.
- V. Nemo debet ministerium tanquam candidatus Petere.

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1: Vide Strype "Annals" II. p. 380.

VI.    Episcopi tantum auctoritate et potestate ministri  
         non sunt creandi.....sed ab ecclesia electio  
         fieri debet.

In the following pages, we have given an outline of the Admonition, a perusal of which will reveal that the writers of the Admonition were pressing for the same changes in Anglicanism as Cartwright had in mind. While vestments and ritual are still offensive, something more fundamental is demanded. They would not merely purge the English Church of its Romanist or unscriptural trappings, but would change the whole system of church-government. Episcopacy with its differences of rank among the clergy, they would replace by presbyterianism, with its equality of ministers. The authority of Bishops should be handed over to an eldership in each church; and no bishop or minister should have any authority outside his own congregation. The Elders, including ministers and seniors, should alone ordain men to the ministry, and only then, when such men have been called to a church by the church itself: they should exercise discipline among their own members, and be themselves elected to their office by the church which they served.

# The First Admonition.<sup>1</sup>

In the preface the writers request the members of parliament to read the work "without parcialitie or blinde affection. For otherwise", they say, "you shal neither see their<sup>2</sup> meaning; nor refraine youreselves from rashly condemning of them withoute juste cause. For certaine men there are of great countenance, which will not lightly like of them, because they principally concerne their persons and unjuste dealings: whose credite is great, and whose friendes are manye, we meane the Lordly Lordes, Archbishoppes, Bishoppes, Suffraganes, Deanes, Doctors, Archdeacons, Chancelors, and the rest of that proude generation, whose kingdome must downe, holde they never so hard: bicause their tyraunous Lordshippe can not stande wyth Christes Kingdome". The writers then claim that, for the reformation they desire, they have both the Word of God and the practice of the "best reformed churches throwoute Christendome". And they conclude, "Either must we have (a) right ministerie of God, and a right government of his church, according to the scriptures sett up (bothe whiche we

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1: Vide Frere and Douglas, "Puritan Manifestos", pp. 1-40

2: The Admonition contained two treatises: the admonition proper; and the reasons why they could not subscribe to the Articles of 1571.

lacke) or else there can be no right religion, nor yet for contempt thereof can Gods plagues be from us any while differred".<sup>1</sup>

In the Admonition they set out what they considered to be the true marks of a reformed church. "It hath been thought good", they say, "to proferre to your godly consideration, a true platforme of a church reformed, to the end that it beyng layd before your eyes to beholde the great unlikenesse betwixt it and this our English Church: you may learne either with perfect hatred to detest the one, and with singuler love to embrace, and carefull endeavour to plant the other: or els to be without excuse before the majestie of our God, who (for the discharge of our conscience and manifestation of his truth) hath by us revealed unto you at this present, the sinceritie and simplicitie of his Gospel".<sup>2</sup> The marks of this reformed church, according to the Admonitioners are three: "preaching of the worde purely, ministring of the sacraments sincerely, and ecclesiastical discipline which consisteth in admonition and correction of faults severelie".<sup>3</sup>

They then compare the Anglican practice with their own standards. With regard to the first matter they allow

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- 1: The Admonition. Frere & Douglas. Ibid. p.6
- 2: Ibid. p.8
- 3: Ibid. p.9



that the "substance of doctrine by many delivered is sound and good", but "here in it faileth, that neither the ministers thereof are accordyng to Gods word proved, elected, called or ordayned: nor the function in such sorte so narrowly looked unto, as of right it ought, and is of necessitie required".<sup>1</sup> And they demand (a) that ministers be examined as to their ability and character; (b) that all who were ministers under Henry VIII and Mary - being then Romanists - should be utterly removed: (c) that all ministers should be called by the Congregation to whom they are to minister, and not thrust on a congregation by a bishop, or ordained without having a pastorate and thus left to find work where they can.

In support of their demands the writers claim the practice of the primitive church. "Whereas", they say, "in the olde church a triall was had both of their abilitie to instruct, and of their godly conversation also: now, by the letters commendatorie of some one man, noble or other, tag and rag, learned and unlearned, of the basest sorte of the people.....are freely received".<sup>2</sup> "Then election was made by the common consent of the whole church: now every one picketh out for himself some notable good benefice, he obtaineth the next advouson, by money or by favour, and so

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1: Ibid. p.9

2: Ibid. p.9

thinketh himself to be sufficiently chosen. Then the congregation had authoritie to call ministers: in stead thereof now, they runne, they ryde, and by unlawful sute and buying, prevent other suters also".<sup>1</sup> "Then, none admitted to the ministrie, but a place was voyde before hand.....but nowe, bishops.....do make 60, 80, or a 100 at a clap, and send them abroad into the cuntry lyke masterles men".

"Then....they were admitted to their function by laying on of the hands of the company of the Eldership onlly: now ther is.....required an albe, a surplesse, a vestiment, a pastoral staffe, beside that ridiculus, and....blasphemous saying, receave the holy gost. Then every pastor had his flocke, and every flocke his shepheard, or els shepherds: Now they doe not only run fyskyng from place to place -..... but covetously joine living to living.....and being but one shepherd....have many flockes. Then the ministers wer preachers: now bare readers. And yff...disposed to preach.... may not without my Lords Licence<sup>2</sup>".

And they end this section with the demands that Advowsons, patronages, impropriations and the bishop's authority to ordain ministers, must be removed, and the congregation's authority to ordain be restored: that "ignorant and unable ministers" be displaced by those who can "feed the flock!"

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1: Ibid. p.10

2: Ibid. pp. 10 & 11

that the "courte of faculties" which grants licences to hold several livings must be utterly overthrown. And they must "Appoint to every congregation a learned and diligent preacher. Remove homilies, articles, injunctions, a prescript order of service made out of the masse booke. Take away the Lordship, the loyteryng, the pomp, the idlenes and livinges of Bishops, but yet employ them to such ends as they were in the olde churche appointed for. Let a lawful and a godly Seignorie loke that they preach, not quarterly or monthly, but continually: not for fylthy lucre sake, but of a ready mynde".<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the sacraments, they criticise the Anglican practice on the ground that it is not according to primitive usage. The Lord's Supper they object is preceded by "reading" rather than preaching: that it is administered in "private houses"; that fragments of the Epistle and Gospel, as well as the Nicene Creed, are mixed up with it: that Communicants are not examined: that wafer bread is used: that Communicants kneel rather than sit: that the Sacrament is administered not with scriptural simplicity, but with the pomp of "singing, pypyng, surplesse and cope wearyng".

In Baptism they object to "interrogatories ministered to the infant, godfathers and godmothers"; to fonts and the

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1: Ibid. pp. 11 & 12

Sign of the Cross. "To redresse these", they say, "your wisdomes have to remove (as before) ignorant ministers, to take awai private communions and baptis~~mes~~, to enjoyne Deacons and Midwives not to meddle in ministers matters, if they doe, to see them sharpelie punished. To joyne assistance of Elders, and other officers, that seing men wyl not examine themselves they may be examined, and brought to render a reason of their hope.....That people be apointed to receave the Sacrament, rather sitting, for avoydyng of superstition, than kneelyng,.....That excommunication be restored to his olde former force.....That the parties to be baptised, if they be of the yeares of discretion, by themselves.....or if they be infants, by their parents.....make rehearsal of their faith.....And finally, that nothing be don in this or ani other thing, but that which you have the expresse warrant of Godes worde for".<sup>1</sup>

With regard to discipline, the Admonitioners claim ~~that~~ the officials to deal with this are ministers, which includes preachers and pastors, seniors and elders, and deacons. "Concerning Seniors", they say, "not only their office but their name also is out of this English Church utterly removed. Their office was to governe the church with the rest of the ministers, to consult, to admonish, to

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1: Ibid. pp. 14-15

correct, and to order all thinges apperteigning to the state of the Congregation. Instead of these Seniors in every church, the Pope hath brought in and we yet maintaine, the Lordship of one man over many churches, yea over sundrie shieres".<sup>1</sup>

As to deacons, their names remain in the church "yet is the office fowlie perverted and turned upside downe". In the primitive church their duty, they point out, was to collect and distribute alms, now it is the first step in the ministry. And they conclude, "if you wyl restore the church to his ancient offices, this you must doe. In stead of an Archbishop or Lord Bishop, you must make equalitie of ministers. In stead of Chancelours, Archdeacons, Officialles, Commissaries, Proctours, Doctors, Summoners, Churchwardens, and such like; you have to plant in every congregation a lawful and godly seignorie. The Deaconship must not be confounded with the ministerie, nor the collections for the poor maye not usurpe the Deacons office:.....And to these three jointly.... the Ministers, Seniors and Deacons, is the whole regiment of the church to be committed. This regiment consisteth especially in ecclesiastical discipline, which is an order left by God unto his church, whereby men learn to frame their wylles and doyngs accordyng to the

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1: Ibid. p.15.

law of God, by instructing and admonishing one another, yea and by correcting and punishing all wylfull persones, and contemners of the same.....The final end of this discipline, is the reforming of the disordered, and to bryng them to repentance, and to bridle such as wold offend. The chiefest parte and last punishment of this discipline is excommunication, by the consent of the church determined....."<sup>1</sup>

After denouncing the misuse of Excommunication in the Anglican church in which, not moral sins, but incomppliance with the Act of Uniformity met with the severest penalties, and therefore appeared to be the greatest sin<sup>2</sup>, the Admonitioners call upon parliament to "Amend.....these horrible abuses, and reforme Gods church, and the Lorde is on your right hand, you shall not be removed for ever". But if they refuse to do this, "God is a righteous judge, he wyl one day cal you to your reckonyng". And they ask, "Is a reformation good for France? and can it be evyl for England? Is discipline meete for Scotland? and is it unprofitable for this Realme?" And they conclude, "Surely God hath set these examples before your eyes to encourage you to go foreward to a thorow and a speedy reformation.....

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1: Ibid. pp. 16-17

2: Ibid. Vide pp 17-18

Altogether remove whole Antichrist, both head body and branch, and perfectly plant that puritie of the word, that simplicitie of the sacraments, and severitie of discipline, which Christ hath commanded, and commended to his church."<sup>1</sup>

In the second part of the Admonition, reasons are given why certain ministers could not subscribe to the Articles of Religion,<sup>2</sup> when summoned for that purpose before the High Commission in 1571. Naturally it traverses the ground covered in part one; but the second part is of interest because it deals more definitely with the requirements of Anglicanism as embodied in the articles submitted to the puritans to bring them to uniformity.

In answer to Article I - "that the booke commonly called the booke of Common Prayer for the Churche of England, authorised by Parliament, and all and every the contentes therein be suche as are not repugnante to the worde of God"<sup>3</sup> - they say, we "have used the same in oure ministerie, so farre forthe as we might": but "we must nedes say....that this boke is an imperfecte booke, culled and picked out of that popishe dunghil, the Masse Book full of all abominations....many of

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1: Ibid. pp. 18-19

2: The Articles of 1562 were re-issued by order of the Queen in 1571, vide D'Ewes "Journal", p. 213

3: The Admonition (Frere & Douglas,) p.20

the contents therein....are againste the woorde of God..." Coming to particulars they object to the reading of the set scripture before the Sacrament, in place of preaching: to private Communion; private Baptism; Baptism by women; holy or saint-days; prescribed services; kneeling at Communion; wafer cakes rather than ordinary bread at the Lord's Supper; vestments; Churching of women. And they not only challenge the things commanded in the prescribed 'order' in the prayer-book, but maintain that the whole Anglican ministry is unlawful, and unable to execute the office of the ministry.<sup>1</sup> They are severe on a 'reading' ministry, in which "he is a sheapheard good inough, that can as popishe priestes coulde; oute of their Portuise, say fairely theyr divine service". And it is blasphemy to them that it should have been said, "that muche preaching bringeth the word of God into contempt, and that fower preachers were inoughe for all London".<sup>2</sup> Homilies and the Apocryphal Scriptures they can't tolerate. They criticise public baptism because the prayer-book gives the impression that in some mystical sense the Act of Baptism takes away sin; because the sponsors have to promise what "is not in their power to perform": because of the questions put to the child who doesn't understand; and because of the

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1: Ibid. p. 22  
2: Ibid. p. 23



Sign of the Cross. They would have the children of the "faithfull only...to be baptized", and the father should make "an open confession of that faith, wherein he would have his childe baptized".<sup>1</sup> They object, too, to marriage being regarded as a sacrament, and to the magical use of the ring. To Confirmation also they object, because of the notion that the Bishop alone can validate this practice, and because insufficient instruction is given to those taking this step; to the ceremonial at burials, and to the Churching of women which "smelleth of Jewishe purification". And they conclude, "In all their order of service there is no edification..... but confusion, they tosse the Psalmes in most places like tennice balles. The people, some standing, some walking, some talking, some reading, some praying by themselves, attend not to the minister. He againe posteth it over, as fast as he can gallop. For either he hathe two places to serve, or else there are some games to be playde in the afternoon.... and if no place else can be gotten it must be done in the Church".....<sup>2</sup>

Then, turning to the Consecration of Bishops, etc. they say that the order "is nothing else but a thing worde for worde drawne out of the Pope's pontifical". And they

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1: Ibid. p. 27  
 2: Ibid. p. 29

go on "as safely may we, by the warrant of Gods word subscribe to allowe the dominion of the pope universally to raigne over the church of god, as of an Archbishop over an whole province, or a Lordbishop over a diocese, which containeth many shyres and parishes".<sup>1</sup>

The Archbishop's Court, they say, is "the filthy quauemire, and poysoned plashe of all abominations that doe infect the whole realme"<sup>2</sup>, and "the commissaries court.... is but a pettie little stinking ditch, that floweth oute of that former great puddle, robbing Christes church of lawfull pastors, of watchfull seniors and elders, and careful deacons".<sup>3</sup>

In answer to the Second Article on the Administration of the Sacraments and common prayer, and the prescribed apparel, the Admonitioners, of course, condemn the vestments in which they see "No order....but confusion: No cumlines, but deformitie: No obedience, but disobedience". And they call them "suche lyke baggage, the preachyng signes of popysh priesthode".<sup>4</sup> And in the second edition of the Admonition, they say: "Neither is the controversie betwixt them and us as they wold beare the world in hand, as for a cap, tippet, or a surplesse, but for great matters

1: Ibid. p. 30  
 2: Ibid. p. 32  
 3: Ibid. p. 34  
 4: Ibid. p. 35

concerning a true ministerie and regiment of the church, according to the word, which things once established the other melt away of themselves".<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the third Article, which referred to the Anglican Articles of Religion - the thirty-nine articles - the Puritans were prepared to accept these, if they were allowed to give their own interpretation of them where necessary. In the matter of doctrine they were not opposed to Anglicanism. And they say "He wold to God that as they (the Bishops etc) hold the substance together with us, and we with them: so they wolde not denye the effect and vertue thereof. Then shoulde not our wordes and works be devorsed, but Christ shulde be suffered to raigne, a true ministerie according to the worde instituted, Discipline exercised, Sacraments purely and sincerely ministered. This is that we strive for, and aboute which we have suffred not as evyll doers, but for resistyng Poperie, and refusing to be strong with the tayle of Antichristian infection, readie to render a reason of our faith, to be stoppyng of all our enemies mouthes".<sup>2</sup>

Field and Wilcox, the authors of the Admonition, were imprisoned in Newgate on July 7th 1572, and the sympathy of the people was such that Neal says, they were visited by

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1: "Puritan Manifestoes", p. 36 (foot note)

2: Ibid. p. 37

crowds "as in Popery they were wont to run on Pilgrimages"<sup>1</sup>. This imprisonment called forth the Second Admonition<sup>2</sup>. This was largely a repetition of the First Admonition, its demands being perhaps set out more orderly. It did, however, elucidate the work of the Eldership or Consistory, and describe the greater assemblies of the proposed church. And we shall confine ourselves to giving an account of these, as described in the Second Admonition.

According to the Second Admonition the Consistory was composed of the ministers of the church - pastors and teachers - who shall "direct them by the scriptures", assisted by elders, "whome the parish shall consent upon and chuse, for their good judgement in religion and godlinesse", and who shall be set apart for this office by their minister preaching a sermon and laying "his handes uppon every one of them". The duty of the Consistory was first, to exercise discipline in the church. "These are they in that church, to whome our Saviour commandeth them that have twice or oftner admonished an offender, and he hearth them not, to utter such an offender: when he saith, tell the church". But they cannot excommunicate, or receive an excommunicated person back into the church, without the assent of the whole congregation. Thus the church safeguards its rights and

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1: Neal: "Puritans" Vol. I. p. 239

2: "Puritan Manifestoes" pp. 87-133

authority, otherwise they "might caste out the tirannie of the bishops, and bring in a new tyrannie of theirs". "Nevertheless, what they do wel, the congregation cannot alter, neither shall the congregation put them, or any of them out, but upon just cause proved, either in that consistorie, or in some one of the Counsels, and the cause accepted for sufficient".<sup>1</sup>

In the second place, they "shall examine all disordered ceremonies used in place of prayer, and abolishe those which they finde evill, or unprofitable, and bring in suche orders as their congregation shall have neede of, so they be few and apparant, necessary both for edifying and profite and decent order: proving it plainely to the whole church that it is so". Also they shall put a stop to "lewd customes.....either in games or otherwise", but they "shall not meddle with the civill magistrates office" by punishing in any other way than by admonition and excommunication.<sup>2</sup>

These shall also exercise supervision over the relief of the poor, which matter is in charge of deacons: and they shall send representatives to a provincial or a national council.

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1: Ibid. pp 118-120

2: Ibid. p. 120. The fearfulness of Excommunication is exhibited. p. 121 f.

These Ecclesiastical Assemblies the writer thus describes:

I. "A conference I call the meeting of some certaine ministers, and other brethren.....to conferre and exercise them selves in prophesying, or in interpreting the scriptures", with a view to arriving at the Apostolic meaning and usage. The conference may also appoint any one or several of its members to be employed on "some affaires of the church"; i.e. we take it, they be engaged in duties outside their own parish, which thing is unlawful without the consent of the Conference. Also "the demeanours of the ministers may be examined and rebuked". It was a place of ministerial discipline.<sup>1</sup>

II. "I call that a Synode provincially which is the meeting of certaine of the consistorie of every parishe within a province, which is of manye conferences.....where great causes of the churches, which could not be ended in their own consistories, or conferences, shall be heard and determined".

A general Synod or National Synod is composed of representatives from all the provincial synods, and this is to be the final authority, unless "there be a more general

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1: Ibid. p. 108

Synode of all the churches". But in "a great matter of the faith, ora great matter expresly against the scriptures", he recommends that even the general synod or the more general synod, are not the final authority, but, as "the scripture saithe, you have one father, one master --- heare him, and examine all things, and holde that which is good, and trie the spirites whether they be of God or no...."<sup>1</sup> In other words, the ultimate authority in matters of faith is a man's own conscience, or his conscientious convictions about the meaning of Scripture.

This system is then compared with the Anglican practice and the writer challenges the bishops to follow the example of those beyond the sea in Queen Mary's days, or to submit the Prayer-Book to the judgment of the Reformed churches, or to hold a free conference on the matters in dispute.<sup>2</sup>

Four points stand out clearly in the Admonitions. The first is the emphasis laid on the equality of ministers. Objections are not raised against using the title of bishop, if it is understood that it is employed in the scriptural sense, and is synonymous with that of pastor or teacher. But the Anglican order of Bishops and the manner in which they are employed, as overlords, is held to be contrary to scripture. Again, ordination is a matter for the elders

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1: Ibid, p. 109

2: Ibid, vide pp. 112-118: 124-133.

and ministers of the church in which the ordained person is to minister, and not the business of a bishop who is outside that church. And since it is laid down that no minister may use, or challenge, any authority outside his own charge, therefore the Anglican orders of superior clergy stand condemned. There are no superior clergy, but only pastors and teachers, and these are equal in dignity.

In the second place, all members of each separate church are to be subjected to the discipline of the consistory of that particular church, in order that evil or disorderly conduct may be reproved, and the persistently evil or unrepentant excommunicated.

Thirdly, the Episcopal form of government and its order of service are to be entirely overthrown. Not only are the Consistory and other assemblies described to take the place of the hierarchy of Bishops etc. but the prescribed service-book - taken from the Mass Book - is to be utterly revised, or its place taken by an entirely new order. And priests who served under Henry VIII or Mary must be removed.

And fourthly, Scripture must be the final authority, and not long usage or the decrees of Early councils: and, therefore, whatever ordinance is not expressly appointed by the Scripture, must go. It is evident, therefore, that these puritans did not seek for changes in certain details of the



Anglican system, so much as for the substitution of an entirely new system. As Paget says: "The question at issue in the Puritan controversy of Hooker's day was not whether the Prayer-Book should be altered here and there, nor whether larger allowance should be made for those who resented its requirements. It was a question which presupposed the conviction that the religious life of a nation must have a uniform expression; it was the question whether the religious life of England should be expressed in the continuance of the historic church of England, or in a system such as Calvin had established at Geneva."<sup>1</sup>

The Authorship of the Second Admonition has been generally attributed to Thomas Cartwright. Bancroft speaks of "The First Admonition and Cartwright's book", and seems to accept it as his.<sup>2</sup> So do Frere and Douglas<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Powicke<sup>4</sup> and others. Scott Pearson<sup>5</sup>, on the other hand, thinks it was not Cartwright's work, but he has no other name to substitute. He says "His contemporaries.....are tacitly agreed in not ascribing it to him, and write as if they did not know."

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- 1: Paget (F) "Introduction to Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V" (1899) p. 53
  - 2: Bancroft, "Dangerous Positions" (1640) p. 69
  - 3: "Puritan Manifestoes" Int. p. XXIII.
  - 4: "Henry Barrow", p. 186
  - 5: "Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism" (1925) p. 74.

who the author was". And he points out that Whitgift, in his controversy with Cartwright, distinguishes between the latter and the author of the Second Admonition,<sup>1</sup> and that Cartwright himself wrote, "It is unreasonable yow should charge them with what I write, or with what the Second Admonition writeth".

That the alarm caused by the Admonition was real, is evidenced by the fact that in June 1573, a Royal Proclamation was issued, ordering all copies of the same to be surrendered to the Bishops or the Privy Council, but the Bishop of London confessed to the Lord Treasurer that not a single copy was brought in;<sup>2</sup> and also by the steps Parker took to refute the claims made by the Admonition. He invited Whitgift to answer the same<sup>3</sup>, and though a friend of Whitgift's, Mr Norton, endeavoured to dissuade Whitgift from doing this, on the ground that "if let alone the matter would die quietly, whereas a controversy would exasperate men's minds and give pleasure to the papists", nevertheless, partly perhaps to remove the suspicion that he was in sympathy with the puritans, and partly to oblige the Arch-

- 1: Vide "Works of Bishop Whitgift" (Parker Society) Vol. I
- 2: Strype, "Parker" Vol. II. pp 256-7 (Cartwright's p. 15: Reply to Whitgift was included in this Proclamation.)
- 3: Strype, "Parker" Vol. II. p. 110: vide also II pp. 134-144

bishop, Whitgift's 'Answer to the Admonition' appeared in 1572. This called forth a 'Defence of the Admonition' by Cartwright, which in turn was followed by Whitgift's 'Defence of the Answer'. Then came in 1575 Cartwright's "Second Replie to Master Doctor Whitgift's Second Answer", and, in 1577, the "Rest of the Second Replie of Thomas Cartwright"<sup>1</sup>.

Whitgift set out to prove, as he says in the Preface to his work, "that all points of religion necessary to salvation, and touching either the mystery of our redemption in Christ, or the right use of the sacraments and true manner of worshipping God, are as purely and perfectly taught... ....in this Church of England at this day, as ever they were in any church sithence the Apostles' time, or now be in any reformed church in the world".....<sup>2</sup> Cartwright naturally takes his stands on the side of the Admonition and his own Articles, and pleads for the Presbyterian system, which he contends is alone scriptural. Like the Admonitioners he relegates the Vestarian controversy to a secondary place though he says that ministers should wear the apparel rather than leave the ministry. But he considers the cap, tippet and surplice "an attire unmeet for a minister of the gospel.... the surplice especially more than the other two;.....being

1: The lengthy controversy is contained in "Whitgift's Works", Vols. I, II & III.

2: Whitgift's Works, Vol. I. Preface p. 3

hurtful monuments of idolatry".<sup>1</sup> And if special attire is necessary, he would have the magistrate to prescribe an unpopish garb.<sup>2</sup> Discipline, however, in the larger sense of polity, inclusive of the correction of vice, etc. is the important matter. This should be in the hands of the Eldership and difficult matters should be referred to Synods,<sup>3</sup> all other courts being abolished. And he would subject the queen to this system<sup>4</sup>. There is little need to dwell at length on this controversy since Cartwright did little more than stress the contentions of the Admonitions. And since it is the Puritan and not the Anglican position that we desire to know, we need not dwell on Whitgift's answers. Needless to say they didn't see eye to eye! Cartwright took up the extreme position of what he considered to be Scriptural requirements; Whitgift, with what to us seems greater sanity, sought to get the spirit of the Scriptures, but would not be bound to the letter of the law.

Nevertheless, considering the laxity in the church at that time, we cannot but admire the insistence of Cartwright on the election of ministers;<sup>5</sup> the necessity of their having a charge<sup>6</sup>; on their being able to preach<sup>7</sup>; on the discipline

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1: Ibid. Vol. II. p.1  
 2: Ibid. Vol. II. p.17  
 3: Ibid. Vol. III. pp.229, 263-267  
 4: Ibid. Vol. III. pp. 295 f.  
 5: Ibid. Vol. I. pp 296 f.  
 6: Ibid. Vol. I. pp. 469 f 506 f  
 7: Ibid. Vol. I. pp. 538 f

of members of the church<sup>1</sup>, and on authority being lodged with the eldership and synods rather than with ecclesiastical and civil courts.<sup>2</sup> Cartwright's scriptural realism may have been pushed too far in some details, but the object in view was not merely a reformation of "orders" but of life too. The presbyterian polity was desired, it would seem, not for its own sake, but because it was believed to be scriptural, and, ipso facto, a better instrument for doing the work of God in the world than Episcopacy,

During this period of literary activity, the Puritans had not been inactive in other respects. Practical experiments on the lines of their propaganda had been attempted. In 1571, the "Propheesyings" or "Exercises" were begun at Northampton, with the consent of the Bishop of the diocese, Dr Scambler, the mayor of the town, and the Justices of Peace of the town and county. Here is Strype's account; "There is on every other Saturday.....an exercise of the ministers both in town and county, about the interpretation of Scriptures. The ministers speaking one after another do handle some text, and the same openly among the people..... There is also a weekly assembly every Thursday after the lecture, by the mayor and his brethren, assisted with the

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1: Ibid. Vol. III. pp. 220-264.

2: Ibid. Vol. III. pp. 150-219. Vol. II. pp. 77 f

preacher, minister and other gentlemen appointed to them by the bishop, for the correction of discord made in the town: as for notorious blasphemy, whoredom, drunkenness, railing against religion, or preachers thereof, scolds, ribalds, or such like: which faults are each Thursday presented unto them in writing by certain sworn men appointed for that service in each parish. So by the bishop's authority and the mayor's joined together, being assisted with other gentlemen in the Commission of the peace, evil life is corrected.....

"There is hereafter to take place, order that all ministers of the shire, once every quarter....repair to the said town; and there after a sermon.....privately to confer among themselves of their manners and lives. Among whom if any be found in fault, for the first time exhortation is made to him among all the brethren to amend; and so likewise the second: and (the) third time, by complaint from all the brethren, he is committed unto the bishop for his correction".<sup>1</sup>

Then follow the rules as to the order of speakers, and how the exercises shall be conducted.<sup>2</sup> Rule VI is noteworthy as it reveals that, at any of these exercises, ministers may be reprov'd for evil conduct - "if any of the speakers.....be infamed or convinced of any grievous crime, he shall be there and then reprehended".

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1: Strype: "Annals" Vol.III p.135-136

2: Ibid. p. 137-138.

All the members had to sign the following confession:

"We whose names are hereunder written...believe and hold that the word of God written in the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testament.....(is) and ought to be open, to be read and known of all sorts of men.....and the authority thereof far to exceed all authority, not of the Pope of Rome only....but of the church also, of councils, fathers or others whosoever, either men or angels. And therefore to this word of God we humbly submit ourselves and all our doings, willing and ready to be judged, reformed or further instructed thereby, in all points of religion".<sup>1</sup>

Paget says, "The system of prophesying probably began..... with little or no reference to the Puritan scheme; it was upheld by most of the bishops, and from time to time regulated with a special view to the exclusion of ecclesiastical politics and inflammatory matters: it seems to have been a sincere attempt to secure in the church a better state of discipline, and an increase of religious knowledge, and of the study of the scriptures".<sup>2</sup>

Whatever grounds Paget has for the assertion that this scheme probably began with little or no reference to the Puritans, it certainly looks as if Puritan ideals were the moving force in it. The prominence given to the Scriptures,

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1: Strype, "Annals" Vol. III. pp 138-140.

2: Paget. "Introduction to Hooker, Book V". p. 64

whereby they are placed above the Pope, the church - evidently the English Church, since the Pope and Councils and fathers are expressly named - and above every other authority, was new to Anglicanism, but fundamental to Puritanism. And the discipline of church members by what seems very like an eldership, composed of "the mayor and his brethren, assisted with the preacher, minister and other gentlemen appointed....by the bishop"; and the discipline of ministers; suggest one of the reforms urgently desired by Puritans. And that the exercises as "a sincere attempt to secure.....an increase of religious knowledge, and of the study of the scriptures", not only met with Cartwright's approval, but were recommended by him to Whitgift as a means of remedying the non-preaching ministry, seems to imply that the idea of the Exercises originated in the Puritan mind.

Moreover, the reformation of the churches in Northampton suggests a strong Puritan influence there. This reformation included the simplification of the priest's dress; music and choirs were banned; the Communion Table was set in the nave of the church; and from the nave rather than the chancel, the minister must read the prayers. Communicants were required to give an account of their lives before partaking of the Lord's Supper: the young were catechised; and in the principal church a sermon was delivered every Sunday evening, and Services in other churches had to terminate in time for this preaching



service.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the regulations which had to be made later, by some of the Bishops, suggest that the 'Propheesyings' were Anglican in origin, and were being used by Puritans as a means of propaganda. In Grindal's regulations in 1576, item VII says, "That no man be suffered in the said Exercises to make any invectives against the laws, rites, policies and discipline of the Church of England established by public authority....." And item VIII says, "Forasmuch as divers ministers, deprived from their livings and inhibited to preach.....have intruded themselves in sundry places to be speakers in the said Exercises, and.....have.....made their invectives against the orders, rites and discipline of the church.....every bishop is to take strict order in his diocese that hereafter none be suffered to be speakers.....which remain deprived or inhibited for the causes aforesaid.....<sup>2</sup>

The Queen's attitude to the "Propheesyings" however, was so unsympathetic, or even hostile, that one is convinced, whatever their origin, that they soon bore the stamp of Puritanism. In 1576 she wrote to Grindal<sup>3</sup>, who was then Archbishop of Canterbury, commanding him at once to forbid

- 1: Vide Neal, "Puritans" Vol. I. p.221 f and Strype "Annals" III, p. 133 f.  
 2: Strype, "Grindal" p. 327-328 vide also Strype "Annals" III p. 472 for Lincoln; and IV pp 546-49 for Chester.  
 3: Ibid, p.329. For Grindal's letter see Ibid. Appendix Bk. II & IX (pp 558-574)

the "Propheesyings" and see that they ceased. Grindal made a bold reply in which he said: "I cannot with a safe conscience, and without the offence of the Majesty of God, give my assent to the suppressing of the said exercises; much less send out any injunction for the utter and universal subversion of the same. If it be your Majesty's pleasure for this or any other cause to remove me out of this place, I will with all humility yield thereto.....Bear with me, I beseech you, Madam, if I choose rather to offend Your earthly Majesty, than to offend the heavenly Majesty of God....." Grindal's sympathies, however, were largely on the side of the Puritans, and for his attitude towards the Exercises, his See was put under sequestration and he himself was confined to his house as a prisoner.<sup>1</sup>

The Queen, however, had her way, and issued a letter to the Bishops against the "Exercises", on May 7th 1577, in which, among other things, she said, "Considering the great abuses that have been in sundry places of our realm, by reason of..... assemblies, called "Exercises",.....we will and straitly charge you that you cause the same forthwith to cease and not be used.....And in these things we charge you to be so careful and vigilant as by your negligence.....we be not forced to make some example in reforming you according to your deserts".<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the fact that, after this letter was sent out, no

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1: Ibid. p. 343

2: Strype, "Grindal" Bk. II. App. X. (pp. 574-576)

less than three hundred ministers were suspended in the Norwich diocese<sup>1</sup> alone, seems ample proof of the presence of puritanism in the "Exercises". And their similarity to the "Classes" which later sprang up in many places<sup>2</sup>, and which were working models of the Presbyterian polity, suggests very forcibly that the original "Propheesyings" were the outcome of the puritan genius seeking for self-expression.

Another practical experiment was the setting up of the Wandsworth presbytery on November 20th 1572<sup>3</sup>. Among those responsible for this are mentioned Field and Wilcox, the authors of the "First Admonition", Walter Travers, whom we shall notice later, and William Bonham and Nicholas Crane who were also connected with the Separatist movement. Marsden maintains that this presbytery was a rival to the Parish church at Wandsworth<sup>4</sup>, while Drysdale holds that it was a setting up of the Presbyterian order in the parish church itself.<sup>5</sup>

As a consequence of this puritan activity, the Queen issued a proclamation<sup>6</sup> in 1573 against Non-conformists -

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- 1: Neal, "Puritans", Vol. I. p. 249
  - 2: Bancroft, "Dangerous Positions" (1640) p. 77
  - 3: Ibid. p. 67. Neal, Ibid. Vol. I. pp. 243-244.
  - 4: "History of the Early Puritans" pp. 62-64
  - 5: "History of the Presbyterians", p. 147.
  - 6: Cardwell, "Documentary Annals", Vol. I.  
p. 348.

"the despisers or breakers of the orders prescribed in the book of Common-Prayer". In it she speaks of the prayer-book as containing nothing "but the scriptures of God and that which is consonant unto it", but which "is now of late of some men despised and spoken against, both by open preachings and writings, and of some bold and vain curious men new and other rites found out and frequented: whereupon contentions, sects and disquietness doth arise among her people....." This evil she attributes to "the negligence of ~~the~~ bishops and other magistrates, who should cause the good laws and acts of parliament.....to be better executed, and not so dissembled and winked at as hitherto., ...." And she commands "all archbishops, bishops.....and all others who have any authority, to put in execution the Act for the uniformity of Common Prayer and the administration of the Sacraments....." And the next part of the proclamation is interesting, as it refers to a definite breaking away of some from the established church, a matter to which we shall return later. Her majesty says: "If any persons shall either in private houses or in public places make assemblies and therein use other rites of Common Prayer and administration of the sacraments than is prescribed in the said book, or shall maintain in their houses any persons being notoriously charged by books or preachings to attempt the alteration of the said orders,

they shall see such persons punished with all severity, according to the laws of this realm....."

It is possible that these unlawful assemblies were the "propheying", and experiments similar to that at Wandsworth, but it is more likely that separatist meetings, which were springing up at this time, were in the mind of the Queen.<sup>1</sup> And men like Cartwright, a warrant for whose arrest was issued in 1573, but who escaped to Germany and matriculated at Heidelberg University in January 25th 1574<sup>2</sup> and like J. Stroude<sup>3</sup>, the printer of the Admonition, etc. who was not so fortunate as Cartwright in eluding his enemies, were no doubt also intended by the second part of this section.

The onus of correcting the disorders and seeking out the non-conformists was laid upon the "Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, Deans and all such as have ordinary jurisdiction... upon pain of her Majesty's high displeasure for their negligence and deprivation from their dignities and benefices or other censures.....according to their demerits".

This proclamation, with its threats to those in authority, evidently stirred up the Bishops, etc. since it is on record that many ministers were suspended or deprived in 1574, and

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1: Vide infra pp.121 f

2: Scott Pearson, "Cartwright and the Elizabethan Puritans" p. 131

3: "Seconde Parte of a Register" (Ed. A. Peel) Vol. I. pp. 112-114.

inferior men were put in their places.<sup>1</sup> But by November<sup>2</sup> of that year, in spite of precautions against the issuing of Puritan literature, there appeared the most able and thorough exposition of the presbyterian puritan's platform. It has been described as "An epoch making treatise, which in the latter part of the 16th and early half of the 17th Centuries exercised an influence in religious thought in England, unsurpassed by that of any other single work"<sup>3</sup>.

This treatise was the work of Walter Travers, and entitled "Ecclesiastical Discipline et Anglicanae Ecclesiae ab illa aberrationis plena E Verbo Dei et dilucida explicatio" or "A Full and Plaine Declaration of Ecclesiasticall Discipline owt off the word off God, and off the declininge off the churche off England from the same".<sup>4</sup> The original work was written in Latin, but a translation appeared about the same time, as they both bear the same year date. The Latin work is dated from "Rupellae, excudebat Adamus de Monte, MDLXXIIII"; the translation being dated "Imprinted MDLXXIIII".

The preface to the Treatise was evidently written by Thomas Cartwright, who was then living at Heidelberg.

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- 1: "Seconde Parte of a Register" (A. Peel) Vol. I. pp 121-123
  - 2: Ibid. Vol. I. pp 108 f.
  - 3: Mullinger "History of the University of Cambridge",  
quoted by Paget, "Introd. to Hooker" Bk.V. pp 57-58.
  - 4: Vide, Paget, "Introd. to Hooker Bk. V" pp. 53-63

"In a letter to Christopher Hatton, about 1580", says Scott Pearson<sup>1</sup>, "after suggesting that his views in regard to church reform may be obtained by a perusal of his own works, Cartwright says, "Yf yt may seeme to longe, lett the triall be by the Ecclesiasticall discipline in Latten, whiche, as it handleth the same matter, so by a preface sett before itt, I have testified my agreament therewith".

As suggested by Cartwright, the "Explicatio" dealt with the same matters as had been handled before by the Admonitions and Cartwright himself. That Travers' work was a "full and clear exposition" - surpassing the previous works on Presbyterian principles, was due, we would suggest, not merely to the fact that Travers was more brilliant than his predecessors, or that he was more conversant with the Genevan system - though he had spent some time in Geneva and was intimate with Beza - but also to the fact that he had the works of his predecessors to draw upon. And it seems to us that the "Explicatio" is largely a summary of the previous works on the subject; the difference being that Travers in his work is not ~~not~~ so much pleading a cause, or in controversy with an opponent, as developing a theme logically and in a serene atmosphere - as if there was no doubt about the matter, and he was legislating for those who were looking to him for

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1: "Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism", p. 136.

guidance. It is a positive statement of the Presbyterian position at that time.

Having shewn the interdependence of doctrine and discipline, he declares that the English church is unreformed, and its doctrines are in danger, since the discipline or polity of the church has not been reformed. He, therefore, would banish the Canon Law, the hierarchy of Bishops, etc. and the rest of the sordid matters in the church, and bring all things as far as possible into line with the scriptures.

In his scheme of discipline he divides the church into two parts: members or plain citizens, and officers. Of the latter there are or were two kinds: the extra-ordinary, such as Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, etc, who have now ceased to be; and the ordinary, which he again divided into two kinds - the individual officials and the composite, such as assemblies.

The individual officials are ministers, including Pastors and Teachers; and he allows, as in the Second Admonition, that Pastors are in dignity above the Teachers; Seniors, who have oversight of offences; and Deacons, who are set over the property of the church and look after the poor.

The Composite officials are the Ecclesiastical Senate or presbytery, which is composed of Pastors, Teachers and Elders, whose business it is to elect ministers - with the



consent of the members - ordain the same, and exercise discipline in the church by correcting offenders; and conferences and synods, which are entrusted with administrative work, and may be provincial, national or international. Here again the similarity to the Second Admonition is apparent.

With regard to ministers, emphasis is laid on the necessity of an inward calling, and, before an election is made, careful examination of the candidate's faith and character must be made by the presbytery of the church to which he seeks to minister. The Church's approval must also be obtained, and, if chosen, he is to be ordained, or set apart by the laying on of hands by the presbytery or ecclesiastical senate, as a sign that he is chosen by God and God's hand will be with him, and that his authority is from God, and therefore he is to be obeyed. The presbytery is claimed to be the same thing as Paul called *πρεσβυτέριον*, and Christ called the Church. (Matthew 18<sup>17</sup>)

And all matters relating to the church came under its authority; and all offenders are to be dealt with by it - rebuking them at first, suspending them from the Sacrament if they do not amend, and excommunicating them if they persist in their evil life.

And as Cartwright contended, so does Travers, that Magistrates are not outside or above the Authority of the church, but subject to it, since the authority of the church represents

the Authority of Christ. Kings therefore should obey the church. And the place or duty of the Magistrate, Travers maintains, is not to interfere with the church, but to establish and protect it on the lines of Christ's commands, seeing to it that it has the right kind of ministry, and is preserved according to the purity required of it in Scripture.

The effect of the "Explicatio" on the puritan cause was not seen immediately. The queen's proclamation of 1573<sup>1</sup>, and the powers given to the High Commission in 1576<sup>2</sup> stirred up the agents of the Crown, and rendered puritan disobedience dangerous. Church-wardens were empowered by the High Commission to destrain from offenders against the Act of Uniformity and to use the money for the relief of the poor; Bishops and other Commissioners were incited under penalty to "search out....all and every such person"; and to render the work more effective, "all and every our justices and other officers and subjects....in all places.....to apprehend or cause to be apprehended any person or persons" who are thought to be offenders.

But that the "Explicatio" was working as leaven in secret is evident from later events. Bancroft says:

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1: Vide Supra pp. 98 f.

2: State Papers (Domestic) Elizabeth CVIII. 7

"Hitherto it should seeme, that in all their former proceedings they (the Puritans) had relied chiefly upon the First Admonition and Cartwright's booke....But now, at the length (about the year 1583) the forme of Discipline (which is lately come to light) was compiled: and thereupon an assembly or councill being helde (as I thinke at London or at Cambridge) certaine decrees were made, concerning the establishing and the practise thereof....."<sup>1</sup> And he goes on, "About which time also.....the further practice of the discipline..... began to spread itself more freely.....it was most friendly entertained amongst the ministers of Northamptonshire....." And Bancroft gives the Puritan's own account of the division of the shire into the three classes of Northamptonshire, Daventry and Kettering. "This device (saith Master Johnson) is commonly received in most parts of England..... but especially in Warwickshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex, etc!"<sup>2</sup> The "discipline which is lately come to light", to which Bancroft here refers, was no doubt the "Disciplina Ecclesiae Sacra ex Dei Verbo descripta", a final revision of which was possibly made in September 1587,<sup>3</sup> and which corresponds closely with the work published when the Presbyterians were in power, in 1644, and entitled "A Directory of Church-

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1: Bancroft, "Dangerous Positions & Proceedings" (Ed. 1640)  
 2: Ibid, p. 77 p. 69  
 3: Strype, "Annals" Vol. VI. pp. 477-479.

Government, Anciently contended for, and as farre as the Times would suffer, practised by the first Nonconformists in the daies of Queen Elizabeth. Found in the study of the Most accomplished Divine, Mr Thomas Cartwright, after his decease; and reserved to be published for such a time as this. Published by Authority".<sup>1</sup>

This "Discipline" reiterates the demands of the Admonitions and the "Explicatio"<sup>2</sup>, so that it is not difficult to see how the leaven had been working since the Queen's last attempts to bring the puritans to order.

In 1583 Whitgift succeeded Grindal in the See of Canterbury. He was as eager to carry out the Queen's desire as Grindal had been slow, and as hostile to the puritans as Grindal had been friendly. In the first year of his primacy he published his 'Articles'<sup>3</sup>. All preaching, reading, catechising and other such like exercises in private places.....(were) utterly inhibited". None were

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1: A reprint of this is given in Neal "Puritans" Vol.V. (pp XI-XVII) Paget gives the Latin work in (Int. to Hooker, Bk. V", Appendix IV", pp 238-251.

3: Vide Strype "Whitgift", Vol. I. pp. 227-232.

2: Drysdale suggests that the Book of Discipline was the order of Wandsworth which, originally written in Latin, had been translated into English by Cartwright, and later revised and enlarged. Vide "Hist. of Presbyterianism", p. 159 and notes on pp 159 and 160.

allowed to preach unless they read the Anglian service and administered the Sacraments according to the Prayer-Book at least four times a year. The prescribed apparel was made compulsory. Only those ordained according to the Anglican Orders were to be permitted to preach etc, and even then they must sign three Articles which were impossible propositions to the puritans. They had to swear:

I: "That her Majesty, under God, hath and ought to have the sovereignty and rule over all manner of persons born within her realms.....of what estate ecclesiastical or temporal soever they be; and that no foreign prelate etc....." This Article may have appeared innocent enough, being but a re-statement of the Queen's supremacy. But it implicated any who upheld the contentions of the Admonitions and the Explicatio, which would subject the Queen to the authority of the Ecclesiastical Senate, Synods, etc.

II. "That the Book of Common Prayer and of ordering bishops, priests and deacons containeth nothing in it contrary to the word of God, and that the same may lawfully be used, and that he himself will use the form of the said book prescribed in public prayer and administration of the Sacraments, and none other". This again was impossible to those who had sympathy with the ideas of the

Admonition, etc.

The Third Article referred to the thirty-nine articles of religion which were not unacceptable to the Puritans.

The Whitgift Articles were severe on the Puritans, but the method of examining ministers was more severe still. In May, the following year, the Archbishop issued instructions for examining suspected persons, which were contained in twenty four articles.<sup>1</sup> By these the person being examined had to confess that the Prayer-book contained nothing repugnant to scripture; whether or not he had refused to wear the vestments, use the Sign of the Cross in baptism, the ring in marriage, and the prescribed burial service, and adhered strictly to the prescribed order, and signed the three articles above mentioned.

This test was so severe on the Puritans that Cecil, Lord Burghley, wrote<sup>2</sup> to Whitgift, complaining of his methods and among other things said, "And in charity, I think, they ought not to answer to all these nice points, except they were very notorious offenders in Papistry or heresy..... I desire the peace of the Church. I desire concord and unity in the exercise of our religion. I favour no sensual and wilful recusants, but.....according to my simple judgment,

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1: Vide Strype "Whitgift" Vol. III. pp 81-87

2: Ibid. Vol. III pp. 104-107.

this kind of proceeding is too much savouring of the Romish inquisition, and is rather a device to seek for offenders than to reform any".

Inability to subscribe to the Whitgift Articles brought forth a series of supplications from the Puritans to the Lords of the Council during the years 1583-1584. These came from Norfolk, Essex, Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire, Ely, Cambridgeshire, etc.<sup>1</sup> The ministers of Kent said that though they had done their duty in their respective charges, they "are in great heaviness, some of us being allreadie put to silence, and the rest living in feare, not that we have bene, or can be, as we hope, charged with false doctrine or slaunderous life, but for that we refuse to subscribe that there is nothing contained in the Booke of Common Praier and of ordaining bishops, priests and deacons, contrarie to the Word of God".<sup>2</sup> Another, signed by seven ministers<sup>3</sup> says: "We have renounced the Pope, sworne to her Majesty's most just authoritie etc. and have subscribed to the Articles of Christian religion, and are readie to do the self same againe, so far as the tenure of the othe and those statuts do require. So likewise we have and do detest the Anabaptists, the Familists and all other heretiques and schismaticall disturbers of the Church; and we have used and doe use in our

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1: Peel, "Second Parte of a Register", Vol. I. pp 223-230

2: Ibid, pp. 225-226.

3: Ibid, pp. 228-229.

dailie ministrie of the church service the Book of Common Praire and none other, neither have in our sermons and catechizings sought to deprave the order and ceremonies of the saide booke, or any ecclesiaticall government by the same law of the land established". They now ask the Council to accept "these reasons of our modest refussall" to subscribe: "Some things seem to us contrarie, repugnant, or against the Word of God, as the allowing of an unlearned ministerie, the reading of the Apocripha, baptisme by private persons, the execution of church government by one man, and manie things are verie doubtfull as appeareth by the writings of great learned men of divers churches, etc". And they go on to commend "the miserable plight of the poore people, hungering after the foode of the Word, who being bereft of us, are all most without all hope of having learned and godlie ministers to reside and continue among them. If they might have better than ourselves we would be glad, but before we came to them they had none that did carefullie teach them and whollie reside with them....."

Petitions were also sent to parliament which met in November, 1584, and on the motion of Sir W. Mildmay, a committee was appointed on December 16th, to consider these petitions, and submit suitable articles to the House.



The Articles submitted to the House<sup>1</sup> began by drawing attention to the Articles of 1562, and the Statute of 1570<sup>2</sup>, which provided that ministers should have ability to preach, and be able to render an account of their faith in Latin. And they called attention to the Canons of 1575, which declared that unlearned ministers should be removed. A plea was then made on puritan lines for a learned ministry: for ordination by a Bishop and at least six other ministers - i.e. by the Eldership, though the word is not used: that no minister be admitted without a cure of souls: that the parish which he is to serve should be consulted and have time to enquire into his fitness; that no oath or subscription be required of a minister, but merely an examination into his character and ability; that ministers be permitted to omit or change the prescribed rites in the prayer-book; that those deprived merely for non-conformity be reinstated; that the "Ex-officio" oath be not tendered to godly ministers, but only those suspected of moral or doctrinal offences be questioned; that "propheying" be sanctioned "for the better increase of knowledge"; that the sentence of excommunication shall not be pronounced by the Bishops etc. alone, but this extreme sentence shall be the considered step

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1: Strype, "Whitgift" Vol. III pp 118-124, D'Ewes "Journal" pp. 157-159.

2: 13 Elizabeth XII (Statutes at Large, Vol. IV, pp 310-312)

taken by "the reverend fathers the bishops.....with the assistance of grave persons, or by other persons of calling in the church with like assistance....and not by chancellors, commissaries or officials, as hath been used"; that non-residence and pluralities be considered and, if necessary, "utterly removed"; in any case a deputy should be found by those enjoying non-residence or pluralities to carry on the work.

A petition<sup>1</sup> was also sent to the Queen, which Lord Burghley endorsed as "Mr Sampson's book to parliament"<sup>2</sup>. This was very similar, in its appeal, to the above Articles, and pleaded with her majesty to re-arrange the bishops' courts, and bring them into line with the presbyterian synods: to provide an eldership in every parish church; and to relieve bishops from "the burden and all worldly pomp, honour and charge" -

These efforts of the Puritans to induce parliament to legislate for reform were, however, in vain. In the Queen's speech<sup>3</sup>, at the prorogation of parliament on March 29th 1585, her majesty made it plain that she had no intention of tolerating what she called "new fangledness". And she warned the "Lords of the Clergy" that she meant to depose them if they did not amend the "fault-finders with the Order of the Clergy,

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- 1: Strype "Annals" Vol. V. pp. 321-329
- 2: Ibid. Vol. V. p. 320
- 3: D'Ewes "Journals" pp. 328-329.

which so many make a slander to myself and the church, whose over-ruler God hath made me". And she said the puritan's "presumption is so great, as I may not suffer it..."

The Presbyterian movement, however, continued to spread by the multiplication of "Classes"<sup>1</sup>, and Neal affirms<sup>2</sup> that by 1590, no less than five hundred ministers had signed their adherence to the Presbyterian Cause. But the time was quickly approaching when even parliament, which had for some years favoured the Puritan ideals, was to register its vote on the Queen's side against the puritans.

Two matters seem to have helped to bring about this crisis. One was the growth of Separatism, which we shall briefly mention later. The other was the Marprelate Controversy.<sup>3</sup> This was a scurrilous and unseemly attack on the bishops, which does not reflect to the credit of the Puritan authors. The only extenuating circumstances are that the reformers, sincerely believing in their cause, were driven to desperation by what seemed to them, the unreasonable and tyrannical policy of the bishops. Who was responsible for these tracts has never been proved.

- 1: Vide R.G. Usher, "The Presbyterian Movement in the reign of Elizabeth", which gives a history of the growth of the Classes.
- 2: Neal, "Puritans I" p. 387 note.
- 3: Vide, "An introduction to the Marprelate Controversy, 1588-1590" (Ed. Edward Arber, 1879) "Martin Marprelate, the Epistle, 1589", ed. Ed. Arber, 1880.

We know, however, that John Penry, a Separatist, suffered death as a supposed author, and that John Udall, a Presbyterian, escaped a like penalty by fortunately dying in prison in 1591, while under sentence of death.<sup>1</sup> The Camden Annals, however, adds the name of Job Throckmorton to the above - "Authores tamen erant Penrius et Udallus verbi ministri et Jobus Throckmortonus vir doctus et facete dicax..."<sup>2</sup> But even among the Puritans there was no unanimity about the authorship at the very time the tracts were being published.<sup>3</sup>

There seems little doubt, however, that these attacks on the bishops intensified their efforts to apply the Whitgift test to the suspected. In November, 1590, Cartwright, the leader of the Presbyterian party, was arraigned before the High Commission, which tendered to him the Whitgift Articles, and charged him with having renounced his orders in the Anglican church and being re-ordained presbyterially abroad; with seeking to set up a new ecclesiastical discipline, and a new form of worship; with having attended various private and unlawful meetings organised to set aside the hierarchy: with having written, or helped to write, the "Book of Discipline" and with knowing, or being in communication with, the authors of the Marprelate Tracts.

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1: Strype: Whitgift, Vol. II. p. 102  
 2: Camden, "Annales", I. p. 497  
 3: Vide Arber, "Marprelate Controversy" cp. pp. 84-175

He refused to commit himself by means of the "ex-officio oath", and was committed to the Fleet Prison.<sup>1</sup> In May, 1591, he was again brought before the High Commission Court, and then, on account of his obstinacy, handed over to the Star Chamber, which Court sent him back to prison and refused bail. Several eminent people, including King James of Scotland, interceded on his behalf<sup>2</sup>. But the Queen was stubborn, and the Bishops relentless. The conditions of release expressed by Whitgift after Cartwright's appeal to him on behalf of himself and his fellow prisoners, were that "Under their own hands (they) declare the church to be a true church: observe the whole order of public prayer and ceremonies prescribed, and renounce all their Assemblies, Classes and Synods, as unlawful and seditious."<sup>3</sup>

In April, 1592, the prisoners laid their case before the Queen. They explained their refusal to take the oath ex-officio, on the ground that it might furnish evidence against them contrary to law and equity. They declared they were not schismatics, having no wish to leave the National Church "for anything we esteem needful to be reformed in it". As to "impeaching your Majesty's supremacy", they contend they accept

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1: Strype, "Life of Aylmer" p. 105.

2: Vide Fuller "Church History" Vol. V. pp 156-157.  
(James' letter to Elizabeth)

3: Strype, "Whitgift" Vol. II pp. 70 f, and appendix pp. 242-260.

it "as far as law requires, and as other reformed Churches of Christendom acknowledge". Concerning excommunication, they said, "we profess that our discipline depriveth a man only of spiritual comforts as of being partaker of the Lord's Table.....without taking away liberty, goods, lands, or any other civil or earthly commodity of life". They disavowed having ordained ministers, or exercised illegal jurisdiction, but contended that conferences are needful and right. And since the Prayer Book declares, "there was a godly discipline in the primitive Church", they deplore it is not yet restored in the Church of England."<sup>1</sup>

In the Session of 1592-1593 two Bills were introduced into Parliament, sponsored by Morrice, a Puritan lawyer and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, to protect the puritans from the tyranny of the ex officio oath. The Queen, however, commanded the Speaker, Sir Edward Coke, not to read Morrice's bills<sup>2</sup>. And ere the session closed the House gave its consent to the "Act to retain the Queens subjects in their due obedience"<sup>3</sup>, which rendered it practically impossible for the Puritans to hope for further reform.

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- 1: Vide Strype, "Annals" Vol. VII pp 120-127.
- 2: D'Ewes, "Journal" pp 474-478
- 3: Ibid. p. 520. 35 Elizabeth Cap. 1.  
(Statutes at Large) pp. 468-471.

This Act made it illegal for anyone above the age of sixteen to refuse to attend church where the Anglican rites were observed; or to print, write or speak against the Queen's authority in Ecclesiastical matters; or to persuade others not to attend the Anglican Church; or to attend "Assemblies, Conventicles or Meetings, under Colour or Pretence of any Exercise of religion, contrary to her Majesty's said Laws and Statutes"; or to persuade others to attend such meetings. The penalties were severe on the offenders. Imprisonment without bail was to be followed in three months by banishment from the Realm, unless the offender within that period promised to conform, and wrote out his submission to authority. And if a banished person returned, he was to be judged "a Felon, and....suffer as in Case of Felony, without Benefit of Clergy".

The prescribed form of Submission<sup>1</sup> was very searching. It read: "I, A.B. do humbly confess and acknowledge, That I have grievously offended God in contemning her Mahesty's godly and lawful Government and Authority, by absenting myself from church, and from hearing Divine Service, contrary to the godly Laws and Statutes of this Realm, and in using and frequenting disordered and unlawful Conventicles and Assemblies, under Pretence and Colour of Exercise of

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1: 35 Elizabeth, Cap. I. Sec. V. (Statutes at Large, Vol. IV. p. 470)

Religion: And I am heartily sorry for the same, and do acknowledge and testify in my Conscience, That no other Person hath or ought to have any Power or Authority over her Majesty: And I do promise and protest, without any Dissimulation, or any Colour or Means of any Dispensation, That from henceforth I will from Time to Time obey and perform her Majesty's Laws and Statutes in repairing to the Church, and hearing Divine Service, and do my uttermost Endeavour to maintain and defend the same".

Menaced by such a law, and watched by the vigilant bishops and the members of the High Commission, aggressive propaganda or experiments along Puritan lines, became extremely dangerous. "Assemblies, Conventicles or meetings...contrary to her Majesty's said Laws and Statutes" comprehended the prophesying and classes, as well as Separatist meetings - conventicles. The Eldership, therefore, which was the very "bones and sinews" of Presbyterianism, and which had functioned in the 'classes', seemed doomed to extinction or, at least, to a precarious existence. Hence, when the Queen died in 1603, the Episcopal Settlement which she had strenuously upheld and defended against the Puritan attack, seemed securely established, while its detractors were cowed, if not defeated.

The reformation along the lines of the "Admonition" and the "Explicatio" advocated by the Presbyterian Puritans,



was intended by them to replace Episcopacy as the established form of religion in England. They would not have been averse to the Act of Uniformity had it referred to a Uniformity in their particular polity. Moreover, as we have seen, they endeavoured by petitions to the Queen and to Parliament to bring about the desired change by legislation. And while working for this end, the majority, if not all, held livings in the Anglican Church until deposed for non-conformity. They had no desire, however, to set up a rival church to that established by law, but to legalise their own system in place of Episcopacy. When their appeals to the Queen and Parliament failed, however, to bring about legal recognition of the Presbyterian polity, they did set up "classes" in the Episcopal churches in many districts, and in this way endeavoured gradually to transform from within episcopal churches into Presbyterian Churches. But these were not rival churches - they were still parish churches - but transformed in polity.<sup>1</sup>

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1: Vide, Neal, "Puritans", Vol. I. p. 303

We now turn to consider briefly another branch of the puritans who, early in Elizabeth's reign, attempted to set up rival churches, and later advocated schism. They were at first known as Separatists, and from about 1582 as Brownists, and were the forerunners of the Congregationalists or Independents.

In Grindal's "Remains"<sup>1</sup> we are introduced to a number of men<sup>2</sup> who were brought before the Ecclesiastical Commissioners on June 20th 1567 - the year after the publishing of Parker's Advertisements - for holding a religious service in the Plumbers' Hall, which they had hired ostensibly for a wedding.

Being asked by the bishop if they had "not the gospel truly preached, and the sacraments ministered accordingly, and good order kept", in the parish churches, John Smith, "the ancientest of them", answered, ".....so long as we might have the word freely preached, and the sacraments administered without the preferring of idolatrous gear about it, we never assembled together in houses. But when.....all our preachers were displaced<sup>3</sup> by your law, that would not subscribe to your

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- 1: pp. 201-216, vide, also Strype, "Parker", Vol.I. p.481
- 2: The number is put down as a hundred: fourteen or fifteen being sent to prison. Ibid. p. 202.
- 3: After Parker's test - vide Supra, pp. 51-53

apparel and your law, so that we could not hear none of them in any church by the space of seven or eight weeks, except Father Coverdale.....then we bethought us what were best to do; and we remembered that there was a congregation of us in this city in Queen Mary's days; and a congregation at Geneva, which used a book and order of preaching, ministering of the sacraments and discipline, most agreeable to the word of God; which book is allowed by that godly and well-learned man, Master Calvin, and the preachers there; which book and order we now hold".<sup>1</sup>

From their defence several things about these Separatists become clear. In the first place, they had at this time no strongly held theory of Separatism. It would seem that, had the Anglican Church permitted liberty in matters of vestments and ritual, they would not have forsaken the parish church. Like the rest of the Puritans, they believed, as one of their number said, that the Bishops, etc, had "brought the gospel and sacraments into bondage to the ceremonies of anti-Christ", and that they defended "idolatry and Papistry"<sup>2</sup>. The separation from the establishment was to them quite a logical step, seeing that they conscientiously objected to the enforced ritual. And it was made natural to them by the memory of what had been done in Mary's reign.

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1: Remains of Archb. Grindal (Parker Society 1843) pp.203-204  
 2: Ibid, p. 208.

The second thing is that they leaned towards the Genevan order, and in this they manifest their similarity to, if not oneness with, the Presbyterian Puritans. One is inclined to think that at the beginning these two branches of puritans were scarcely distinguishable. We shall see later that the separatists had the same 'orders' as the presbyterians - ministers, elders and deacons; and that they advocated the same 'discipline' of church members. Moreover, among the names of the founders of the Wandsworth Experiment in 1572, we find those of William Bonham and Nicholas Crane, who in 1569 had been imprisoned for separation, and are spoken of as "the chief teachers of these separatists"<sup>1</sup>. And the way in which they both assisted in either experiment<sup>2</sup> - separation or presbyterianism - seems to show that in the early years, at any rate, the dividing line between the two systems was not clearly defined.

There must have been, however, from the first, a difference in point of view between the separatists and the presbyterians; otherwise when both were confronted by the same objectionable things in the Anglican Church, why did they make different reactions to them? The separatists, in spite of threats and imprisonment continued to hold conventicles when at liberty, while the presbyterians in the main never

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1. Grindal's Remains, p. 316 note.

2: Vide, A. Peel. "The First Congregational Churches" pp. 11-12.

separated. Bonham and Crane were perhaps exceptional instances of Presbyterian Separatists. When, for instance, the Plumbers' Hall prisoners were set at liberty, they met for worship in the house of James Tynne, a goldsmith<sup>1</sup>; and after they were discovered, and their leaders imprisoned, Grindal, wishing to bring the Separatists to order, procured their release, on the promise of William Bonham, who became their minister, to refrain from non-conformity. But the promise was not kept by Bonham who had declared; "I, William Bonham, do faithfully promise, that I will not at any time hereafter use any public preaching, or open reading, or expounding of the scriptures; nor cause, neither be present at, any private assemblies of prayer, or expounding of the Scriptures, or ministering the Communion, in any house or other place, contrary to the state of religion, now by public authority established, or contrary to the laws of this realm of England. Neither will I inveigh against any rites or ceremonies used or received by common authority within this realm".<sup>2</sup>

In this instance there seems to have been a misunderstanding of Grindal's concessions, for in the Separatists' letter to the privy council the prisoners complain, or excuse their

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1: Vide Ibid, p. 10. A list of those found in the Goldsmith house is given by F. J. Powicke in "Lists of the Early Separatists" (Congregational Hist. Society) Vol. I. pp. 141-143.

2: Grindal's Remains, p. 318.

conduct on the ground that Grindal had in effect said: "that we were freed from our Parish Churches, and that we might hear such Preachers whom we liked best in the City: also, whereas we requested to have baptism truly ministered to our children according to the word and order of the Geneva book; he said, that he would tolerate it, and appoint two or three to do it; immediately after, at our request, he appointed two preachers, called Bomham and Crane, under his hand-writing to keep a lecture".<sup>1</sup>

But had they clearly understood Grindal's intentions, the result would have been similar. Separatism was inevitable to a certain section at that time. And it would appear that it was fairly widespread about London. In his letter<sup>2</sup> to Bullinger, in June 1568, Grindal writes; "Our controversy concerning the habits ----- had cooled down for a time, but broke out again last Winter; and this by the means of some who are more zealous than they are either learned or gifted with pious description". And he goes on to say that they met in private houses, in the fields and occasionally in ships; that they ordained their own ministers, elders and deacons; that they exercised moral discipline among their members; and that they numbered two hundred. Since the leaders of the Plumber's Hall Congregation were in prison during this winter, this

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1. Grindal's Remains. p. 316. Note.

2. Zurich Letters. (Ed. Hastings Robinson) Vol. I. pp.201-202.

congregation must have been a different one, though some of the members of the former congregation may have joined this one.

The reason for separation at this time seems to have been the conviction which is expressed by two writers of the period to whom Dr Peel calls attention<sup>1</sup>, and whose views are recorded in the puritan manuscript, "A Seconde Parte of a Register"<sup>2</sup>. After denouncing the Anglican vestments etc. which they regard as Roman and Anti-christian, it becomes a matter of conscience to them to forsake a church which upholds what is so contrary to the word of God. "For in the church of the traditioners there is none other Discipline, but that which hath bene ordeined by the Antichristian Popes of Rome....." And since, says one writer, "I have yielded my selfe subject to the discipline of God's Word.....if I should now again forsake and joyne my self with the traditioners, I should then forsake the union wherein I am knyht with the body of Christ...."

And they deny to the queen any authority to compel men to believe anything which is contrary to scripture; and whoever, against the light of his own conscience, conforms to

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1: Peel, "The First Congregational Churches", pp. 22-24

2: "A Seconde Parte of a Register" (Ed. A. Peel) Vol. I. pp. 55-61. See also Burrage "Early English Dissenters", Vol. II. pp. 13-18.

the Queen's behests, "his soule is lost for ever without repentance..... (for) the soule of man for religion is bound to none but unto God and his holy word".<sup>1</sup>

This conviction that it was utterly wrong to remain in the Anglican Church while conscientiously out of sympathy with its anti-christian practices, was evidently the primary cause of separation, and the point of cleavage between the Presbyterian and Separatist puritans. This matter had been debated between Nicholas Crane and Thomas Cartwright<sup>2</sup>, and later was the subject of correspondence between Cartwright and Robert Browne<sup>3</sup>, who in 1582 published in Holland his tract, "Reformation without tarying for Anie; , and of the wickednesse of those Preachers which will not reforme till the Magistrate command or compell them"<sup>4</sup>.

Browne seems to have been the first to give to Separatism anything like a definite polity. In the spring of 1581, he and Robert Harrison set up a separatist and independent church at Norwich. He had no sympathy with the Puritans who tarried for the magistrate

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1: "Seconde Parte of a Register", Vol. I. p. 58

2: Ibid. pp. 136-143.

3: "An Answere to Master Cartwright his Letters for joyning with the English Churches....."  
(copy of original letters in Dr Williams' Library, London)

4: Ed. T. G. Crippen (Congregational Hist. Society 1903)



to legalize the desired reforms. He believed the reformers should carry out what they believed to be the will of God in spite of the Magistrate, since the magistrade is under and not over the church. "Except the Magistrates will goe into the tempest and raine", he writes, "and bee weather beaten with the haile of Gods wrath, they muste keepe vnder the roafe of Christes governement. They must bee vnder a Pastorall charge: They muste obeye to the scepter of Christe, if they bee Christians. Howe then shoulde the Pastor which hath the oversight of the Magistrate, if hee bee of his flocke be so overseene of the Magistrate, as to leaue his flocke, when the magistrate shall uniuertlie and wrongfullie discharge him".<sup>1</sup> And Browne tilts at the Presbyterians by saying, "Yet these Preachers and teachers will not onelie doo so, but even holding their charge and keeping with it, will not guide and reforme it aright, because the magistrates doo forbidde them forsooth"<sup>2</sup> His conviction of the preacher's duty is thus summed up: ".....it is an abuse of my guifte and calling, if I cease preaching for the Magistrate, when it is my calling to preach.....And this dispensation did not the Magistrate give me, but God by consent and ratifying of the church, and therefore as

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1: "Reformation without Tarying for Anie", pp. 18-19  
 2: Ibid.

the Magistrate gave it not, so can he not take it away"<sup>1</sup>  
 And he concludes his wordy but evidently sincere tract by asking, "Howe then dare these menne (the Bishops) teache vs, that anie evill thing is tolerable in the church, as though the church governement could not remedy it: yea and so tolerable, that all men should be brought into bondage thereby: yea into so foolishe bondage that they should protest a thing to be evill, and so thinke they are excused to practice the same".<sup>2</sup>

In the same year Browne published another tract from the same place - Middlesburgh - entitled, "A Booke which sheweth the life and Manners of all true Christians, and howe unlike they are onto Turkes and Papistes and Heathen folke. Also the pointes and partes of all Divinitie, that is of the reuealed will and worde of God, etc". The book is cast in the form of a catechism containing one hundred and eighty five questions and answers. For example, Question I asks, "Wherefore are we called the people of God and Christians?" And the Answer is given, "Because that by a willing Covenant made with our God, we are under the governement of our God and Christe, and thereby do leade a godly and christian life".

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1: Ibid. p. 22

2: Ibid. p. 31

This work is interesting as it reveals some peculiarities of the Separatist point of view as well as some similarities to the Presbyterian Puritans. Question 35 asks "What is our calling....." and the answer is, ".....planting and gathering of the church under one kind of government". And according to the next question and answer, this is to be done by "Covenant and Conditions" - God on his part has promised "He will be our God and Saviour", and will give them of his spirit: while they on their part, "must offer and give up (themselves) to be of the church and people of God.....". We must make profession that we are his people, by submitting ourselves to his lawes and gouvernement...."

And later in the tract Browne goes on to declare that every member of the Church is a king, priest and prophet. As kings they have to watch and privately and publicly rebuke one another, and separate the wilfully sinful from the church. As priests, they have to offer up prayers for themselves and others. As Prophets, they have to teach the laws of Christ, and "Exhort, stir up and move" others.

The Separatists, like the Presbyterians, believed in the discipline of the members of the church, but unlike them they put that discipline into the hands of the church rather than the eldership. And while the Presbyterians

exalted the eldership and the ministry over the members of the church, the Separatists believed in the high-priesthood of all believers, and therefore the officers of the church had no greater authority than the members. And one is here reminded of the later troubles at Frankfort, begun by Ashley, which terminated with the decree that the church had authority over the ministry and not vice versa.<sup>1</sup>

The exaltation of each and every member, not over others, but to a lofty equality as kings and priests and prophets, was due to Browne's conception of the church as a company of men and women whose hearts had been truly drawn to Christ.<sup>2</sup> To him the Kingdom of God was not to be begun by whole parishes, but by the worthiest, be they never so few - such as were drawn together by a common faith in, and loyalty to Christ. And these were the church.<sup>3</sup> In the Sacrament there "must be a separation of those which are none of the church"<sup>4</sup>. The similarity of the Separatists to the Presbyterians was therefore formal rather than real. The Separatists had Pastors and Teachers,

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1: Vide supra pp. 33-38.

2: Vide Browne's "A True and Short Declaration Both of the Gathering and Joyning together of certain Persons, etc". (Reprint, 1888)

3: Ibid, pp. 19-20 (The Gathered Church was Browne's logical conclusion: Separation from Anglicanism was therefore inevitable)

4: Browne "A Bpoke which Sheweth", question 60.

the former "exhorting and applying especially", the latter having a "special gift for teaching and less of exhorting"; Elders, who were "help(s) unto them in overseeing and counselling": Deacons who relieved the poor; and widows who visited the sick<sup>1</sup>. There was also an Eldership in each church - "meetings of the most forward and wise; for looking into matters"; also the Prophecie or meetings - "for the use of everie man's gift in talk or reasoning, or exhortation and doctrine": and Synodes, when weaker churches seek help of the stronger for deciding or redressing of matters, or the stronger look to them for redress.<sup>2</sup>

Another work which gives the Separatist platform at this period is a "little thing" entitled "A True Description of the Visible Congregation of the Saints under the Gospel, according to the word of Truth"<sup>3</sup>, which appeared in 1589. Dr Powicke attributes it to Henry Barrow who, with John Greenwood, was a leader of the Separatist congregation in London, known as the "Ancient Church", and who suffered death with Greenwood at Tyburn in 1593.

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- 1: Ibid, questions 53-54.  
 2: "A Booke which sheweth", question 51.  
 3: Reprinted in Powicke's "Henry Barrow, Separatist", App. IV. pp. 342-347.

In this work it is stated that there is but one congregation or shurch, which "containeth in it all the elect of God that have been, are, or shall be; but..... as it is seen in this present world, it consisteth of a company and fellowship of faithful and holy people, gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, their one (only) King, Priest (and) Prophet; worshipping Him according to His Word (aright), being peaceably (and quietly) governed by His officers and laws....."<sup>1</sup> This Congregation (Church)<sup>2</sup> "enjoyeth (most) holy and heavenly laws; (most) faithful and vigilant pastors; (most) sincere and pure teachers; (most) careful and upright elders (governors); (most) diligent and trusty deacons; (most) loving and sober relievers; (and a most) humble, meek, obedient, faithful, and loving people;.....all bound to edify one another, exhort (admonish) reprove [encourage] and comfort one another....."

"No office here must be (is) ambitiously affected,..... Here is no intrusion or climbing up another way into the sheepfold than by the holy and free election of the Lord's holy and free people.....craving the direction of His

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1: Ibid, p. 342.

2: Words in brackets were in the original text (i.e. 1589) without brackets is the 1641 text. Square brackets mean additions to original text.

Holy Spirit, for the trial and approving of [their] gifts.... thus hath every one of the people interest in the election and ordination of their officers....."

Then comes a description of the ideal qualifications of the officers. The Pastor must be "no young scholar", but one "holding fast that faithful Word [of truth] (according to doctrine) that he may be able to inform, exhort, admonish and rebuke.....a man.....of good report.... unreprouvable as God's steward.....modest, humble, meek, gentle, and loving;.....careful and watchful over the flock.....not holding his office in respect of persons..... but as he will answer to (before) the chief Pastor (Shepherd) in the great day of his accounts". The Teacher "must be mighty in the Scriptures, able to convince the gainsayers..... holy in his conversation (of life unreprouvable).....sober, humble, temperate, etc....." The Elders must be men "of wisdom and judgment, indued with the spirit of God, able to discern between cause and cause (between plea and plea)..... to prevent and redress evils, always vigilant", to see the ordinances and laws of God kept by members and officers alike. Deacons must be "men of honest report, having the mystery of (the) faith in a pure conscience.....grave, temperate, not given to excess nor to filthy lucre". Widows or relievers must be over sixty years old "for the

avoiding of inconveniences.....well reported of for good works.....compassionate and helpful" to people "in adversity....."

After a more detailed description of the duties of these officers, the writer proceeds to exalt the "exercise of Prophecy", or preaching, declaring that it is "the first ordinance that the Lord commanded, and commended in His Church.....exhorting all His saints to the same, as the most special and excellent gift, yea, and most needful at all times, but especially when the pastor and teacher are either taken away by death, imprisoned or exiled".<sup>1</sup>

The Church thus organised and loyal to Christ is then likened to an army marching "against all enemies, both corporal and spiritual (ghostly): peaceable in itself... terrible to the enemy.....triumphing over their tyranny with patience, [over] their cruelty with meekness, and over death itself by rejoicing in suffering, with joy unspeakable and glorious". Then comes the closing section in which the holy purity of the church is set forth, into which "there ought not to enter any unclean thing, [and

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1: This was not in the original text, but was added in 1641, But since the persecution of the Separatists was more vigorous before than after that date, it would seem that this Exhortation of the members of the church to prepare themselves for the office of preaching, was but a registering of a practice that was in vogue, and not an exhortation to something new.



if any creep in and be discovered, to be speedily removed]...."  
 And in order to maintain this purity, discipline is necessary,  
 an account of how to conduct this being given.<sup>1</sup>

The differences between the Separatist and Presbyterian puritans may be thus summed up: While both claimed to be advocates of the Scriptural Church, and both leaned towards the Genevan system, the Separatists felt compelled to forsake the state church, while the Presbyterians remained within it and attempted to transform it. Because of its "heinous abuses and intolerable enormities", it ought to go, felt the Separatists, and the very buildings ought to be destroyed since they were founded by Papists, and its revenues ought to be confiscated to the Queen.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the Separatists' ideal of the church was a company of believers drawn together by a common faith and loyalty. Such a church could not be co-extensive with a parish, but must be selective of the best in the parish.

Thirdly, such a church, or fellowship of believers, was the Supreme authority over all matters connected with the church. Its ministers, elders and deacons, were created or chosen by this church, as in Presbyterianism, and they were honoured because of their office, but the church was the final authority - the officials being merely members of the

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1: "A True description...." Powicke, "Henry Barrow",  
 pp. 346-347.

2: Vide Dr Powicke, "Henry Barrow", p. 128 (Barrow's views..)

larger body of believers in that particular church, having no commission or power delegated to them by Conferences or Synods.

It was the whole church, therefore, and not an elected eldership, which exercised discipline, elected ministers and other officials. Moreover the members were encouraged to pray and preach so that, if necessary, they might fill the pastoral office in times of persecution, and when without a pastor.<sup>1</sup>

The Separatists up to the death of Elizabeth were not a large body. Sporadic congregations frequently appeared round about London, from 1567, which give the impression that their numbers were considerable<sup>2</sup>. But several of these appear, from the lists of names given by Dr Powicke,<sup>3</sup> to have been moving congregations which settled in different places to avoid detection. And it would appear that ignorance of this fact was at the basis of Sir Walter Raleigh's statement in parliament<sup>4</sup>, in 1593, that there were 20,000 Brownists in England. Dr Peel's<sup>5</sup> conclusion is that the total was little more than two hundred. But he has in mind

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1: Vide Supra, p. 135.

2: Vide Zurich Letters (Ed. H. Robinson) 1st series pp 201, 221, 237, 249. 2nd Series, p.158

3: "Lists of Early Separatists", Cong. Hist. Socy, (1902)

4: D'Ewes "Journals", p.517

5: "The First Congregational Churches", p.45

the genuine Separatists round about 1593, who were prepared to risk everything for their opinions. And it seems likely that the ranks of the fluctuating Separatists who came out of the Anglican Church round about 1563, when Parker's "Advertisements" appeared, were considerably reduced when pressure was brought to bear upon them by Whitgift and the ex-officio oath. After the Act<sup>1</sup> of 1593, it became almost impossible for Separatists, or Brownists as they were then called, to meet for worship, and they were compelled to seek the more hospitable shores of Holland.

Nevertheless the spirit of Separation lived on. In the year Elizabeth died an Independent Church was formed at Gainsborough. And its growth, together with the distances some of its members had to travel, necessitated its dividing into two churches - the second at Scroby - in 1607. But owing to threatened danger under the 1593 Act, the former church moved to Holland in 1607 and the latter followed a year later<sup>2</sup>.

It is not our purpose to follow the puritans into the Stewart period, as their history during that time was largely concerned with the attempt to secure legislation on the lines of their respective programmes. The Presbyterians desired and still worked for the substitution of the

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1: Vide spura, pp. 117-118.

2: Vide Dr John Brown, "Pilgrim Fathers of New England", Chaps. II & III.

Genevan for the Anglican polity, and for a period - from 1643-1653 - they had their opportunity.

The Separatists or Brownists, who now became known as Independents, still desired freedom to worship according to their particular ideals, without being molested and persecuted. They also for a period - from 1653 to 1660 - enjoyed such freedom. Though, under Cromwell's regime, the Independent ministers became parish clergymen, which was not what they desired<sup>1</sup>, since such a position precluded freedom from state interference, and was a contradiction of their ideal of the church, as a fellowship of the elect, drawn together by a common faith and loyalty to Christ.

Having, therefore, endeavoured to trace the causes of Puritanism, and having tried to set forth their ideals and aims, we now turn to consider the influences of this movement on English life and character.

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1: Vide Whitelocke "Memorials of English Affairs" pp.560-570.

The Independents in parliament wanted Disestablishment and Disendowment. And a resolution of the House on July 15<sup>th</sup> proposed that after November 3<sup>rd</sup> that year (1654) ministers should no longer be supported by the state: and a further resolution proposed the abolition of patronage altogether.

## CHAPTER TWO.

### INFLUENCES OF PURITANISM.

#### I. ON THE CONCEPTION OF RELIGION IN TERMS OF MORAL VALUES.

It would have been surprising if a movement such as we have attempted to describe had left no impression on English life and character. Its duration - extending over the whole of the Elizabethan reign and right on to the Restoration in 1660; and the zeal of its advocates - many of whom suffered loss of all things gladly for their ideals - were almost sufficient to preclude such a fate, apart from the subject-matter of the controversy.

When, however, we consider the matters which engaged the Puritans' attention, and called forth from them such zeal and sacrificial persistency, so much which they advocated seems so worthy and reasonable, that it would appear that only prejudice prevented intelligent minds from assenting to many of their demands. In spite of the persistent opposition of the framers and upholders of Anglicanism, however, the Puritans did win the sympathy and capture the imagination of a large and increasing number of Englishmen. And it was in virtue of this fact, and because many of their ideals contained within them something of eternal truth, that their influence has lived on from one generation to another. Not all their ideas and ideals however,

were such as reasonable men could accept. As we hope to shew in the following pages there were things good and things not so good in this movement, which time and experience were to sift out and assign to their proper place.

Being concerned first and foremost with religion it was but natural that the Puritans' influence should be the greatest in this sphere. Indeed it might truthfully be said that they had no other influence than religious, simply because they had no other interest. If Puritanism affected the current of politics, literature and other so-called secular matters, as indeed it did, it was because these matters of human interest were inevitably drawn into the vortex of Puritan religious thought and feeling. For religion to the Puritans was not merely one of the human interests of life, like politics or literature, but a spirit which permeated and coloured the whole of life. It was a way of looking at things and judging things. Naturally therefore whatever concerned life tended to be brought under the religious judgment.

The Puritans' standard of judgment was the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which they regarded as the revealed will of God. The sanctions of scripture were their standard of right in the moral sphere, and of truth in doctrine. The authority of the Bible superseded the

authority of the church and every other authority - including man's reason. What the Scripture allowed or commanded must be accepted. What was not authorised by Scripture was unlawful. Unfortunately in accepting the Scriptures as the infallible guide to truth and right conduct, the Puritans did not discriminate sufficiently between the Hebrew scriptures and the Christian. They put new wine into old bottles and old wine into new.

To the modern mind this slavish subjection to the whole Bible was one of the weaknesses of the Puritan position, and it was fruitful of many errors both in their ideas of church polity and in their conception of christian conduct. And the modern mind may feel more sympathy with the broader outlook of Whitgift and Hooker, both of whom contended that it was the spirit and not the letter of Scripture that mattered. Nevertheless, as the "back to Christ" Movement of recent years has liberated our age from some of the narrowness of Puritanism, even so the narrowness of Puritanism - if we may so speak of their Scriptural standard of judgment - provided in many respects a more excellent way morally for their age than had obtained either under Romanism or Anglicanism.

In studying the history of the period in which the Puritans made their appearance and sought to impose their ideals on the nation, one is forced to the conclusion that

however unwelcome their presence and ideals were to the powers that be, they were not without benefit on the spiritual and moral life of the nation. The religious background of Romanism was still very real, and while it is true that the Roman Church had fostered a religious spirit in the nation, this religious spirit had been more superstitious than intelligent, and more formal than ethical.

The Anglican Protestant Church under the guidance of Elizabeth and the bishops made a brave attempt to break away from the Roman tradition in many things. As we have seen with regard to doctrine, every minister had to accept the thirty-nine articles, every church had to be provided with a Bible in English, and with the paraphrases of Erasmus, and every minister was commanded to teach the Commandments, etc. to the people. To bring an end to superstition images, altars, relics and pictures were to be removed. The Service-Book was in English, and largely Protestant in doctrine, and the Communion Order, while vaguely Catholic in its indefiniteness, was very different from the Mass. And for ministers not qualified to preach, Homilies were provided in order that the worshippers might be instructed.

In view of all that was being attempted to set up a Protestant Church in the reign of Elizabeth, it may seem a short-sighted policy on the part of the Puritans to have



rebelled against the few remnants of Popery that remained in the church. Even outstanding Continental reformers, while not approving of vestments and minor matters of ritual, such as kneeling at the Communion, the use of the ring in marriage, and the Sign of the Cross in Baptism, nevertheless urged the Puritans to accept these things for the time being, and press on with the reformation, in the hope that as time went on these things might be removed. And one might argue that if the reformers in England had accepted this advice, and spent their strength in creating in the minds and hearts of Englishmen a truly Protestant opinion, and a spiritual or moral life consonant with that opinion, all that they desired would ultimately have been achieved.

But to argue this is to overlook the important fact that such a way of action was sternly opposed by the Queen. We are told that not one of the first Bishops who consented to serve under Elizabeth was happy about the use of vestments. But they conscientiously set aside their own preferences in order to assist the queen and the Protestant cause, in the hope that as time went on modifications and changes might be made. But this was a hopeless dream. Elizabeth's autocratic will, strengthened by the Act of Uniformity, made these bishops her servants, whose business it was, not to evolve a church-order according to their

liking, but to see that the 'Order' laid down at the beginning was faithfully carried out. Had the bishops refused to submerge their individual preferences to the dominating will of the queen, then they would have been treated in the same way as the queen treated Grindal, when he refused to suppress the "Propheesyings", viz, removed from office as impediments in the queen's way, and others more servile or obedient would have been appointed in their places. And if we can conceive of all who might have been appointed to the office of bishop refusing to do the queen's bidding, then the very thing that the puritans, as a section of the clergy, did, would merely have been done by the whole clergy or by a much larger body of them. In that case Puritanism might not have been a sectional movement, but might have represented the main stream of religious opinion in England.

This of course is to conceive of the impossible. For there were those in England, like Cox and his party, who came to Frankfort in 1555, who were quite satisfied with the Prayer-Book and the Anglican Order. But the Puritans were not of this company, but of the company of those who in the first Frankfort Church felt it a duty to make alterations in the Prayer-Book consonant with their ideas and ideals. And this party, which formed the main body of the Puritans, could not, like the first bishops, sink their preferences in the interests of peace,

but were compelled from deeply held convictions to risk everything for the truth as they saw it.

While the conception of religion in terms of moral values was one of the final results of Puritanism, and possibly its finest fruit, it is doubtful whether at the beginning the Puritans conceived of their goal in such terms. A life that is controlled by the sanctions of Scripture undoubtedly possesses high moral value, and the Puritans no doubt realised this. But the motive which animated these reformers does not seem to have been conceived of in terms of moral value, but in terms of Scriptural sanction. And these two things are not necessarily the same. A moral life can be attained by other ways than that delineated in the Old and New Testament Scriptures. Whitgift, for instance, may have been morally as good a man as Cartwright, but to the Puritans he was living under a delusion, if not in open sin, because he happened to be the head of a church which, as the Puritans thought, was unscriptural and therefore anti-christian.

This habit of assessing values in terms of Scriptural conformity was no doubt the weakness as well as the strength of puritanism. Its weakness is seen in that its adherents were blind to the virtues of any other church order than their own, which to them was the only scriptural order. Episcopacy stood condemned from the first simply because it

not merely allowed or demanded a ritual which was not sanctioned by the New Testament, but also because, so the Puritans contended, Episcopacy was not the order outlined in the New Testament. It never seemed to occur to them, as it did to Whitgift and Hooker, that polity was a changeable thing, the value of which depended less on its scriptural sanction than on its being a fit vehicle for the expression of the spiritual life. And this inability to see that 'orders' and government were secondary, and that the truths taught and the spirit inculcated were primary and fundamental, was the stumbling block in the puritans' way to co-operation with the Anglican Church. On the other hand this rigid adherence to scriptural authority, while it tended to make the Puritans bigots, also made them pioneers in the evolution of a strong moral life in England. It is not an easy task to follow the fortunes of the Anglican Church and assess the moral fruits of its endeavours, simply because in the Elizabethan age many of the churches were being ministered to by puritans who did their best to evade the requirements of the Act of Uniformity. This evasion produced the confusion which Secretary Cecil reported to the Queen in 1564<sup>1</sup>, but it did more than that, it produced such experiments as that which was attempted at Northampton<sup>2</sup>

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1: Vide Supra pp 50-51.

2: Vide Supra p.95

where the children were catechised and the members of the church were disciplined in moral conduct, and expected to attend a preaching service for instruction in the religious life. And from the growth of the "propheesyings"<sup>1</sup> which also had their beginning at Northampton, it is arguable that a large number, if not all, of the ministers who were eager enough to take part in these propheesyings, which were held primarily for the education and discipline of the ministers, would also attempt to instruct and discipline the members of their own particular churches on the lines of the Northampton experiment.

These "propheesyings" were puritan in origin and represent the eagerness of the reforming spirit of the puritan divines, which desired to see the church served by ministers who were apt to teach, and worthy in character. They might be likened to our summer schools of theology, and to our modern "Retreats". The regulations issued by various bishops for the conducting of these "propheesyings", indicate that sometimes they were used for puritan propaganda of the Presbyterian sort, and that this was distasteful and could not be tolerated. And this has given the impression that the "Propheesyings" were Anglican and not Puritan in origin. But the truth seems

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1: Vide Supra pp. 73-75

to be that Anglican puritans, who were not satisfied with Anglicanism as they knew it, were united with Presbyterian Puritans in this Enterprise; and therefore to use the "propheesyings" for presbyterian propaganda was naturally distasteful and apt to lead to divisions, as well as contrary to the purpose for which the "propheesyings" were founded. Grindal's<sup>1</sup> sympathy with the "Propheesyings" is indicative of the Anglican puritans part in them. And Cartwright's interest in them, and his plea that they should be restored, as well as their similarity to the "Classes" of a later day, which were entirely of Presbyterian origin, indicate the presence of the Presbyterian Party in them.

If therefore we take away the Anglican and Presbyterian Puritans from the Established Church, what have we left?

In 1586, twenty eight years after Elizabeth came to the throne, a survey of the ministry was made by puritans in the "Classes", that is by those of Presbyterian leanings. If their finding are correct, then a deplorable condition of things is revealed. Here is the summary for the counties examined.<sup>1</sup>

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1: Vide his letter to the Queen. Strype "Grindal" Appendix pp. 566-567 - in particular.

2: The Seconde Parte of a Register" (Ed. A. Peel) Vol.II. p.98

Counties:	Livings.	Preachers.	No. Preachers.
Cornwall.	160	29	140
Lincoln Lindsey	625	121	460
Rutland	49	14	29
Oxford.	123	35?	98
Berks.	120?	44?	51
Bucks.	210	45?	139
Middlesex.	60	14	48
London (City)	123	97	46
" (Arch-deaconry)	-	8	69
Sussex	140	24	-
Norfolk.	(400)	-	400
Essex.	335	-	173
Warwick.	192	41	120

"This gives a total of 2,537 (+) parishes in which are 472 'preachers' and 1,773 'no preachers'. It is impossible to reckon the number of non-residents, because some of the counties return only the preachers who are non-resident, others only the double-beneficed men who are non-resident, &c. &c. But there are at least 467 double-

beneficed men and 353 who are non-resident".<sup>1</sup>

Neal says that out of 10,000 parishes there were only 2,000 who could preach.<sup>2</sup> We don't know how he arrived at this conclusion, but his per centage - 20% - is a little greater than the above.

The Puritans' survey was prefaced by the remarks: "How miserable the state of our Church is for want of a godlie learned ministrie thorow out this Realme, maie appeare by this brief of divers counties and shieres gathered trulie out of the surveis made the last Parliament, and partlie this, 2 of November, 1586."<sup>3</sup> And the "miserable state" of the church is further illustrated by such frequent comments as, "onlie two meane preachers, and both of suspected life"; "three preachers, two of them non-residents"; "three preachers, and all lewde men"; "dumb ministers and readers six"; "a good dicer and carder, both night and daie"; "his conversation is most in houndes"; "he was lately a serving man and simple fellow"; "a common market man, and delighteth more in buying and selling than in his flock". And "notorious drunkard" and "adulterer" are frequent comments.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1: "Seconde Parte of a Register". Ibid.
  - 2: "History of the Puritans", Vol. I. pp. 415-417.
  - 3: "Seconde Parte of a Register" Ibid, p. 89
  - 4: Ibid. pp. 89-177.



At an earlier date - "about the beginning of her Majesty's reign" - the Puritans in a supplication to Parliament depicted the condition of the clergy as they then saw them. Among other things they said: "Nay, is not this pretious blood for want of this glorious gospell preached and true discipline duellie administered.....by drunkards, adulterers, schismatiques, heretiques, atheists, blasphemers, And an infinite number of such like prophane persons, contemned, derided, and shamefullie troden under their filthie feete? Are there not still these idoll ministers in our Church, who notwithstanding the articles agreed on, abuse the holie ministrie of the Lord? Others that are idle bellies who can and will not feede in due season their flocke..... Others that have two or more benefices and dignities contrary to the express Word of God, making little or no conscience at all of continual residence and discharge of their function, besides a number of popish priests and godlesse wretches, who with uncleane hands, usurp and defile the ministrie of God, being utterlie unworthie to be admitted to the lowest function of His Church".<sup>1</sup>

Comparing the two accounts there does not seem to have been much improvement during the intervening years. One can

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1: "Seconde Parte of a Register", Vol. I. p. 253.

understand the early condition described above, when one remembers that "many popishly affected Priests still kept their hold by their outward compliances", as Strype remarks.<sup>1</sup>

The kind of men these were has been well described by men like Latimer and Simon Fish. The former in his "Sermon on the Plough" deals with the faults of these "unpreaching prelates". He tells them that "preaching of the Word is the people's meat, meat and not strawberries that come but once a year". And he goes on "Methink I could guess what might be said for excusing them. They are so troubled with lordly living, they be so placed in palaces, couched in courts, ruffling in their tents, dancing in their dominions, burdened with ambassages, pampering of their paunches, like a monk that maketh his jubilee: munching in their mangers, and moiling in their gay manors and mansions, and loitering in their lordships that they cannot attend it. They are otherwise occupied some in the king's matters, some, etc. etc.....Is this a meet office for a priest that hath a cure of souls? ..... I would fain know who controlleth the devil at home in his parish, while he controlleth the mint.....They are lords and no labourers; but the devil is diligent at his plough.

He is no unpreaching prelate; he is no lordly loiterer from his cure, but a busy ploughman; so that among all the prelates,

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1: "Life of Matthew Parker" Vol. I. p. 181.

and among all the pack of them that have cure, the devil shall go for my money, for he still applieth his plough. Therefore, ye unpreaching prelates, learn of the devil: to be diligent in doing your office, learn of the devil; and if ye will not learn of God or good men, for shame, learn of the devil".<sup>1</sup>

The picture given by Simon Fish is even worse. He sees their lives, not from the point of view of neglecting their cure, but from the point of view of greed and immorality. He writes, "they have the tenth part of all the corne, meadowe, pasture, grasse, woole, coltes, calves, lambes, pigges, geese and chickens. Over and besides the tenth part of euery seruanntes' wages, the tenth part of the woole, milke, hony, waxe, chese and butter. Ye a and they loke so narrowly vppon theyre proufittes that the poore wyues must be countable to theym of euery tenth egg or elles she gittith not her ryghtes at ester shalbe taken as an heretike.....Whate money get they by mortuaries, by hearing or confessions (and yet they will kepe therof no councyle), by halowing of churches.....by cursing men and absolving theim agein for money? what a multitude of money gather the pardoners in a yere? Howe moche money get the Sommers by Extorcion yn a yere by assityng the people to the commissaries court and afterward releasing th[e]

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1: Hugh Latimer, "Sermons" (Everyman Edition) pp. 60 & 70.

apparaunce for money? Finally, the infinite nombre of begging freres whate get they yn a yere?"<sup>1</sup>

Later on he says, "who is she that wil set her hondes to worke to get iiid a day and may haue at lest xxd a day to slepe an houre with a frere, a monke, or a prest? What is he that wolde laboure for a grote a day and may haue at lest xij.d. a day to be baude to a prest, a monke, or a frere?"<sup>2</sup> And Fish would make short work of this idle and immoral priesthood.

"Tye these holy idell theues to the cartes", he says, "to be whipped naked about euery market towne till they will fall to laboure.....Then shall as well the nombre of oure forsaide monstrous sort as of the baudes, hores, theues and idell people decreace....."<sup>3</sup>

So long as there was a strain of ex-Romanist priests of this sort in the Anglican church, so long would there be the condition of things complained of in the Puritans' census.<sup>4</sup> And though such men had to sign their allegiance to the Act of Uniformity and the Declaration<sup>5</sup> of 1561, which outlined the Protestant position and doctrine of Anglicanism, nevertheless it did not follow that such assent would make any real

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1: Simon Fish, "A Supplicacyon for the Beggers" (Ed. Ed.Arber, 1878) pp. 3/4  
 2: Ibid. p. 8  
 3: Ibid. p. 13  
 4: Vide Supra, p. 150  
 5: Vide, Strype, "Parker" Vol. I. pp. 182-183.

difference in their outlook, their evangelical zeal, or their personal morality. When Archbishop Parker in 1561 demanded returns to be made to him of the condition of the clergy in his province, he found a similar state of things to those revealed by the Puritans' census in 1586.<sup>1</sup>

Many clergy held several livings - some as far apart as London and Yorkshire; and in London not more than one-third were preachers, while in the Hereford diocese Scory, the bishop, complains that "there are diverse and many chapels..... which be either unserved, or else served with a Reader only"<sup>2</sup>.

There is no doubt that Archbishop Parker, as well as all the Bishops, were anxious to amend these evils. On April 12th 1561, certain Articles for the regulation of the Clergy were agreed upon at Lambeth,<sup>3</sup> 'Readers' were to be examined; the 'Declaration' about doctrine was to be enforced; no curate or minister was to be permitted to serve without examination; and no minister was to remove to another diocese without a testimonial as to his fitness being received from the diocese which he left; old service-books of Roman usage were to be abolished; and priests who had been deprived were not to be allowed to serve a cure except at the discretion of the Ordinary, who presumably would

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1: Vide Strype. "Parker", Vol. I. pp. 187-191.

2: Ibid. p. 190

3: Ibid. pp. 194-195.

subject them to examination as to their fitness. It was also agreed that candidates for confirmation should be instructed or catechised, that a larger catechism should be drawn up for the use of communicants, and a Latin Catechism prepared for use in schools. The intention of these Articles was to sift out Roman Catholics, and to guard the entrance into the ministry, and create a truly Protestant Church.

Unfortunately the bishops had not full command of the machinery of the church. And while they themselves at first were touched with something of the reforming zeal of the Puritans, and would have done their utmost to remove or reform lax and Romanist priests, and purge the church and its ritual of offensive Roman vestiges, they found themselves hindered and opposed by the queen who seemed more ready to tolerate and wink at Roman customs and clerical laxity than to suffer the ambitions of the puritans to take effect. The result was that the bishops, as servants of the crown, became more occupied in attempting to suppress the more radical puritans than in carrying out reforms. And eventually most of the bishops seem to have lost whatever Puritan sympathies they had, and to have become mere instruments of the queen's policy. Grindal is the outstanding exception among the early bishops, and his incomppliance cost him his freedom and his see.

It seems very unlikely that the state of things revealed

in the Puritans' census of 1586 could have obtained had the puritans been allowed to put their programme into operation, or had the parliament of 1572 been able to legislate for the church on the lines of the 'Admonition'. In the first place the Puritans would have utterly removed all clergy who had been ministers under Henry VIII and under Mary, i.e. all who might be suspected of Romanist sympathies. It was a strong measure, but under the circumstances it might have been beneficial. The Puritans of the Genevan school were always drastic: they didn't believe in compromise. And perhaps this accounts largely for the odium in which they were held by a great many both in their own day and since. Human nature tends to suspect extremes, not merely because of the difficulty of achieving the extreme, but also because enthusiasms, like prejudices, often over-step the truth of things. However they would have eradicated Romanists root and branch. In the second place, they would have permitted men to enter the ministry only after trial had been made both of their ability to teach and preach, and of their character or moral life. Surely very reasonable and commendable things to do. With these suggestions the Anglican bishops could not have disagreed, since Lambeth, in 1561, had laid down the same demands.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, the

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1: Vide Supra, p. 156.

method which the Puritans proposed to adopt which caused consternation in the Anglican fold. Candidates according to the Puritans, should not be examined by the ordinary and ordained by a bishop, but examination should be made by a body of clergymen and laymen known as a Conference. And if the conference's recommendation was favourable then the consistory of eldership of the particular church which desired a minister should also examine the candidate, by accepting of his services for a period of trial. If then he was found satisfactory, he was to be ordained to the ministry of that particular church by the whole eldership of that church. The Separatists ~~or~~ or Independents advocated and adopted a similar method, except that the authority for calling and ordaining was vested in the whole congregation, and not in an eldership; and of course there was no conference to examine candidates, as each church was a separate or independent body.

This meant, of course, that the authority and privileges of the Anglican bishops were to be taken away. To the Puritans, these bishops were an offence since they exercised an authority which in the eyes of the Puritans was Romanist in origin and not scriptural. The Bishops occupied a false position. All who were lawfully ordained to the ministry were, so the Puritans contended, episcopi or bishops according to the New Testament. But bishops in a very different



sense. Their ideal was Genevan rather than Roman; Presbyterian rather than Episcopal.

But setting aside this matter of controversy, there seems no doubt that the Puritans' proposed method of examining and ordaining candidates for the ministry, would have secured, had it been adopted, worthy and able men; it would also have prevented what they themselves desired to prevent - the Anglican practice of ordaining men who had no charge, and who were therefore tempted to secure a living by underselling their services to patrons who were not always moved to give the livings at their disposal to the ablest men, but to those who would make the best financial return to the patron. Of course the Puritans entirely disapproved of church livings being in the hands of laymen. In the "Admonition" their first demand ends with "Your wisdoms have to remove advowsons, patronages, impropriations....."

While the Puritans' demands on behalf of the ministry were put forward under the conviction that these demands represented the will of God as revealed in the New Testament scriptures - a claim which both Whitgift<sup>1</sup> in his reply to Cartwright and the "Admonitions", and Hooker in his

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1: Vide: Whitgift's Works, (Parker Society)

"Ecclesiastical Polity"<sup>1</sup>, challenged and attempted to refute - there was also another motive mixed up with the Scriptural one. It is impossible to believe that they blindly followed the Scriptures simply because they were the Scriptures, but also because they believed that the way of the Scriptures was the sine qua non of that moral life which the church existed to cultivate and foster. Whitgift, Hooker and other Anglicans might think they saw other ways to the attainment of that moral end. But the Puritans believed their way was the Divinely appointed one.

And it was for the securing of a moral life in the church and in the Nation that the Puritans were zealous to set up their particular form of church orders and government. Particular care had not been exercised hitherto in the appointment of ministers. Worn out serving men had been presented to livings by patrons whom they had served, and untrained laymen had climbed up into the fold. In 1560, Parker had to forbid the Bishops from ordaining what he calls "laymen of mechanical trades and occupations"<sup>2</sup>. But Grindal in 1574 found the church still being served by

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1: "Ecclesiastical Polity", especially Bk. VI, which maintains the Anglican practice against Presbyterian Discipline.

2: Strype. "Parker", Vol. I. p. 180.  
c.p. Supra, p. 18 Bucer's Statement.

many ignorant and unqualified men.<sup>1</sup> And the Puritans' census reveals how many such men were still in the church at a much later time. Moreover the Puritans' desire to see a moral life consonant with the requirements of scripture growing up among the laity, is manifested by their insistence on discipline. What had been done in the Northampton experiment they would like to have seen done in every church. This demand was stressed in the Admonition, and reiterated by Cartwright and Travers. Indeed discipline was a fundamental necessity with them if the church was to be the body of Christ in the world. And the Separatists were at one with the Presbyterian Puritans in this. The church was not co-extensive with whole parishes, but consisted of those who believed in Christ and manifested His Spirit in their daily conduct.

The reasonableness of these claims was not unrealised by some of the directors of the Anglican policy. In 1572 - the year in which the Admonition appeared, Lord Burghley drew up certain propositions entitled, "Things needful to be considered, how to be ordered"<sup>2</sup>. Among other things the Lord Treasurer proposed that "The churches wold be replenished with the proper Parsons and Vicars.....the statut for resort to common prayers wold be by some better ordre executed

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1: Strype, "Grindal", Vol. I. pp. 173-175

2: Vide, Strype, "Parker", Vol. II p. p. 205-206.

and the imperfections therein amended. So that none should lyve as they doo, without any manner of Servyce of God. Which hath bred so many heathen atheists to the dishonor of God, and to the daunger of the realm". Order should also be taken for the better observance of Sunday, and "The Bishops and Clergy to be reformed, for their wastes of their patrimonies, the negligence of teachyng, and the abuse of pluralities, and non-residence....." These matters were taken up with some show<sup>of</sup> enthusiasm by Parker<sup>1</sup>, who made a great speech on the subject before the Convocation which met in May the same year. Nothing however was done, as the Queen prorogued the Assembly on July 1st, and it didn't meet again till 1575, the year in which Parker died. His successor, John Whitgift, was unfortunately more occupied in endeavouring to bring the Puritans to order than in reforming Anglicanism on the lines suggested above.

Strype suggests that what moved Lord Burghley to draw up his propositions of reform was his consciousness of the glaring need of it. "The Churchmen" says Strype, "heaped up many benefices upon themselves, and resided upon none neglecting their cures: many of them alienated their lands, made unreasonable leases and wastes of their woods, granted reversions and advowsons to their wives and children,

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1. Ibid, pp. 207-211.

or to others for their use. Churches ran greatly into delapidations and decays; and were kept nasty, and filthy, and undecent for God's worship. Among the laity there was little devotion. The Lord's day was greatly profaned, and little observed. The Common Prayers not frequented. Some lived without any service of God at all. Many were mere heathens and atheists-----"1

And even Whitgift, the doughty champion of Anglicanism, confessed in his controversy with Cartwright, that "In the Apostle's time, all or the most that were Christians were virtuous and godly..... now the church is full of hypocrites, dissemblers, drunkards, whoremongers....."2 An exaggeration perhaps due to the point Whitgift desired to carry against his opponent. Nevertheless it is illuminating.

But in spite of the deplorable condition of religion in the Anglican church of this period, Elizabeth would not tolerate any interference with the order established. It was in vain that the Presbyterian Puritans petitioned her Majesty and the House of Commons, and put forth their schemes in Admonitions, etc. and experimented on the lines of the "Propesyings". We can't believe that this was because the Queen had no interest in the moral condition of the Church, but rather because she felt that Anglicanism, if sincerely

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1: Strype, "Parker", Vol. II. pp 204-205.

2: Whitgift's Works. (Parker Society) Vol. I. p. 382.

tried, could yield as good, if not better fruits than Puritanism. And she meant that it should be tried, since it was the established religion of England, and she was the supreme head of the church.

Nevertheless we contend that the proposals of the Puritans, could they have been adopted, would have speedily remedied many of the moral evils then in Anglicanism. But unfortunately these proposals, as revealed in the "Admonition" and the "Explicatio", implied the overthrow of Episcopacy. But could a compromise have been arrived at, and the suggestions regarding the trial of ministers and the discipline of church members, have been adopted, these two things would have made a difference.

Grindal in his letter to the Queen about the 'Prophecy-ings' which he refused to inhibit, says in defence of these exercises, "where afore were not three able preachers now are thirty meet to preach at St Paul's Cross; and forty or fifty besides, able to instruct their own cures".<sup>1</sup> And Dean Paget says<sup>2</sup>, "In justice to those who were impatient and indignant at the scandalous deficiency of preachers" - meaning the adherents to the policy of the Admonition and Explicatio - "it must be remembered that when Hooker began his treatise this lack had gone on for nearly thirty years, amended indeed,

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1: Strype, "Grindal" Appendix p.568

2: Paget, "Introduction to Hooker, Bk. V. pp. 132-133.

but very incompletely: so that a whole generation had grown up seeing parishes neglected and the poor untaught. It is easy to laugh at the Puritan exaltation of sermons, at their vehement denunciation of an unpreaching ministry: but it is unjust to forget the greatness and the persistence of the neglect which they denounced".

The failure of the Puritans' proposals to find acceptance in the Anglican Communion did not mean however that the Puritans failed to influence the moral and religious life of the nation. They were prevented from setting up the kind of polity they desired, but they could not be prevented from disseminating their ideas, and, with more or less secrecy, putting them into operation as occasion allowed.

Two things were noticed in the first part of this treatise; the failure of the Queen and her Bishops to stop the publication and dissemination of the 'Admonition' and Cartwright's 'Defence' of the same; and the growth of the 'propheesyings' and the spread of the classes, mentioned by Bancroft. By these means the Puritan ideas were kept alive and fostered in spite of the vigilant High-Commission Court. And though the Act of 1593 made propaganda dangerous, it didn't quench the spirit of these eager reformers. In the next reign we see a rapid growth of Puritanism,

especially in Lancashire.<sup>1</sup> So too with the Separatists, that other branch of Puritans. Largely drawn out of England by the Act of 1593, many returned during the reign of James I. Though he had given no encouragement to them, Thomas Helwys, who was attached to Smyth's Church, which had gone out from Gainsborough in 1607, brought his followers back to London in 1611, and founded in Newgate Street the first Baptist Church in England.<sup>2</sup> And in 1616 Henry Jacob, who had served in Robinson's church at Leyden, returned and founded the Southwark church in London.<sup>3</sup>

No doubt the tolerance of Abbott who was then Archbishop and who was less severe on Nonconformists than either Whitgift or Bancroft, his predecessors, or than Laud, who was soon to succeed him, encouraged this Puritan activity. It was during Abbott's primacy, moreover, that the "Lectureships" were instituted<sup>4</sup>. These were preaching services in market towns, and were conducted without the accompaniment of the Anglican prayer-book. Some of the ablest Puritan divines

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1: Vide Halley, "Lancashire: its Puritanism and Nonconformity" - It was the Puritan strictness with regard to Sabbath observance which James I found in Lancashire that occasioned the "Book of Sports", vide *infra* p. 138.+

2: Crosby, "Hist. of the Baptists" Vol.I. pp 271-272.

3: Waddington, "Congregational History", pp.198-200.

4: Neal, "History of the Puritans", Vol. II. p. 180,  
J.Fletcher, "Revival & Progress of Independency",  
Vol.III. p. 113 f.



held lectureships in parishes where the people rarely heard a sermon from the incumbent. Those Lectures, says Dr. Powicke, "stood for the moral aspect of worship as distinct from the ceremonial.....to the Puritans (this) was their great recommendation."<sup>1</sup> In 1629 Laud who was then Bishop of London manifested his want of sympathy with the lectures by urging Charles I to issue injunctions to the lecturers to wear the surplice and read the Anglican Service before preaching.<sup>2</sup> And after attaining the primacy in 1633, he adopted more effectual means of killing the lectureships by breaking up the Corporation of St. Antholin's and other similar bodies, which had hitherto raised money for carrying on the lectureships.

It must not be forgotten either that within the Anglican Church itself there was always a strong leaven of Puritans, not only of the extremer sort who would have set up a form of Presbyterianism in place of Episcopacy, but of the milder kind, who, like the earliest bishops, would have liked to see Anglicanism purged of some of its faults. Grindal and Abbott were outstanding instances of such men. And there were many lesser lights in the church like them. Of this sort were the Anglicans who in 1629 and 1630 emigrated to Massachusetts under Francis Higginson

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1: Powicke, "Life of the Rev. Richard Baxter", pp. 29-30  
 2: Neal, "Puritans", Vol. II. pp. 178-180.

and John Winthrop respectively<sup>1</sup>, as the Pilgrim Fathers had sailed to New England in 1620.<sup>2</sup> These emigrations drained England of some of her finest sons who were the flower of Puritanism.

It may be well now to consider what was the ethical conception of religion which the Puritans held and which they wished to impose on the nation. Among the early Puritans the matters which absorbed their attention were chiefly concerned with the organization of the church. The followers of Cartwright, as well as the Separatists, were actuated first and foremost by the necessity of setting up a church polity which they believed to be consonant with the New Testament ideal. Their ultimate purpose, however, we believe, was to guarantee a Scriptural standard of life in the church. The proposed Scriptural polity was merely the means to that end. By having preachers and teachers in the ministry of intellectual ability and moral character who should shepherd a particular flock, and catechise and exercise discipline, a moral or scriptural life would be assured in the church.

We have contended in an earlier part of this section that this proposed discipline would have been beneficial, and would have corrected many abuses in the ministry, and

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1: Neal, "Puritans" Vol. II. p. 182, cp. p.260  
 2: Ibid, pp. 111 f.

assured a higher standard of morals among church members. The early Puritans however never had the opportunity of putting their scheme into operation on a large scale, and therefore it is difficult to judge what might have been their influence on morals. When however we turn to the later Puritans in the years of their supremacy in the state, we find them imposing their "discipline" not on church members only, but on the whole nation. They assumed to themselves the position of arbiters of the moral life, and they attempted to impose that moral life on the whole people. In both these matters we think they were wrong, since they interfered with the sacred rights of personality. The Puritans' standard of right became the legal standard of right, and the private individual had no appeal against it.

It ought to be said however that the Puritans lived in an age that had not learnt the grace and justice of toleration, and that Anglicanism had led the way in imposing its will on the people. As the established religion of England, Episcopacy had been enforced with all the power at the disposal of the State. Fines and imprisonment had been the penalty of clerical nonconformity, and absence from worship on the part of the laity had involved them in a fine of one shilling.<sup>1</sup>

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1: Op. I. Elizabeth, Cap. 2 "Statutes at Large" Vol.IV.  
p. 117 f

Whether the early Puritans would have been as despotic as the later, if they had had the power, may be problematic. One is inclined, however, to feel that they would - the Separatists being excepted perhaps. It seems very evident from the attempt of the Presbyterian Puritans in the year 1572 to get Parliament's sanction for the 'Admonition' that they would gladly have seen their policy forced upon the nation. And that they would have been no less intolerant than the Anglicans, but perhaps more cruel, can be judged from the fierce temper of Thomas Cartwright in his controversy with Whitgift about death penalties for sin. The Puritan champion held firmly with the teaching of Zechariah XIII and Deuteronomy XIII, while the Anglican pleaded for the less severe method of the Gospel. And Cartwright said, "If this be bloudie and extreme I am contente to be so counted with the holie goste".<sup>1</sup>

While the Puritan "Discipline" was concerned with the correction of the real and supposed faults of Anglicanism - the moral delinquencies of ministers and church-members, and the polity of the church; when the Puritans got the power to impose their discipline, they went beyond the correction of polity and the 'discipline' of church members, and attempted to discipline the whole nation.

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1:    Seconde replie. p.115.

In the "Directory of Church Government" to which we have referred<sup>1</sup>, and which was drawn up in order that "the wicked may be corrected with ecclesiastical censures, according to the quality of the fault"<sup>2</sup> we see the intentions of the puritans with regard to the church-members. When sin had been committed by one of the members, it was the custom for the elders to apply admonition and censure, and if the fault was not repented of and corrected, then followed as a last resort, excommunication. And their discipline was arbitrary in its methods and prejudiced and narrow in its moral outlook. One is inclined to feel that it wasn't Christian but Hebraic or, at best, Pauline, both in outlook and temper. There was no attempt to inspire men with a love of Christ, and encourage them to cherish his spirit, simply because the Puritans themselves did not seem to have caught the spirit of Christ. Their theology of course did not help them in this respect. Love for Christ was little more than gratitude to one who had paid a penalty imposed on sinful man. And their moral ideal consisted not in cherishing the Spirit which animated Christ - the Spirit of holy and brotherly love - but in keeping oneself free from the world, the flesh and the Devil, conceived of in terms

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1: Vide Supra, pp. 106-107.

2: Neal, "Puritans". (1822) Vol. V. App.IV. - a reprint of the Directory.

of the ten Commandments and the Pauline Epistles. And the sins of the world - pastimes and amusements, and the sins of the flesh - fornication, adultery, drunkenness, together with a rigid observance of the Sabbath-day, which must be kept holy, were the matters which chiefly concerned the Puritans in their moral reformation of the natural man. And in contradiction of the Spirit of Christ, which patiently wooed men to goodness, they attempted in the spirit of the Hebrew law to compel men to an arbitrary standard of goodness, first by discipline among their own church-members, and then by enacting laws of prohibition on all moral delinquencies, or what the Puritans conceived as such.

In the earliest days we catch glimpses of how the Puritans would have drilled and disciplined the Nation in morals, could they have had their way. In 1584, for instance, Thomas Sampson issued a supplication to the Queen regarding Sabbath observance. He pleaded that "The Lord's Day, even the Sabbath Day, which we do barbarously call Sunday, may hereafter be kept so holily, that it be not abused nor misspent, either in open feasting, or in making, or using any public shows, plays or pastimes. Nor that there be any fairs or markets kept open any Sabbath day.....And that all games and pastimes of shooting, bowling, cocking, bear baiting, dancing, prizes of defence, wakes, may-games, and all other such rude disports, be utterly forbidden to be

used upon any Sabbath Day; and that upon great punishment to be laid upon the offenders, so that the Lord's Day may be kept holy as it is commanded....."<sup>1</sup>

The same matter was pressed later by Dr Bound<sup>2</sup>, but it was not till 1643, when Anglicanism had been stripped of its authority,<sup>and</sup> Puritanism was<sup>the</sup> dominant religious force in the nation, that we see the sort of moral legislation which they desired enacted. On March 22nd, that year, parliament gave "strict charge" says Neal, "to Church-wardens and constables.....that they do not permit or suffer any person or persons, in time of divine service, or at any time on the Lord's Day, to be tippling in any tavern, inn, tobacco-shop, alehouse.....nor suffer any fruiterers or herb-women to stand with fruit, herbs, or other victuals or wares, in any street.....at any time of that day.....or any milk-woman to cry milk; nor suffer any person to unlade any vessels of fruit, etc.....or to use any unlawful exercises or pastimes.....If any persons offend.....to be punished as the law directs."<sup>3</sup>

Before this time however, in 1625, the Puritan members in parliament had carried through an Act for Sabbath observance. It was entitled "An Act for the punishing of

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- 1: Strype, "Whitgift" Vol.II. p.415 -"Annals" Vol.III. pp.320-329.
- 2: Strype, "Whitgift" II. p.415.
- 3: Neal, "Puritans" Vol. III. pp. 36-37

divers ~~Abuses~~ committed on the Lord's Day, called Sunday".<sup>1</sup>  
 This Act made it illegal to meet on the Lord's day outside  
 one's own parish "for any Sports and Pastimes whatsoever",  
 and also illegal in one's own parish to engage in "any bear-  
 baiting, Bull-baiting, Interludes, Common Plays or other  
 unlawful Exercises and Pastimes....."

This Act in the first year of Charles I was the  
 Puritans' answer to James' "Book of Sports" issued in 1618,  
 which was called forth by the King's journey through Lanca-  
 shire when, as Perry<sup>2</sup> says, "the king had been offended at  
 the Puritanical strictness in the observance of the Lord's  
 Day, which he had found prevalent. It was represented to  
 him that the Papists were gaining much influence through the  
 rigours insisted on by the Puritan clergy, and Morton,  
 Bishop of Chester, who was with the King, recommended him  
 to publish an Edict authorising certain sports and games on  
 the afternoons of Sundays".

"Our express pleasure therefore is", said this Book  
 of Sports<sup>3</sup>, ".....that no lawful recreation shall be  
 barred to our good people.....that after the end of divine  
 service our good people be not disturbed, letted or  
 discouraged from any lawful recreation, such as dancing,  
 either men or women; archery for men, leaping, vaulting,

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1: I. Caroli Cap.I vide "Statutes at Large", Vol.IV. p.779  
 2: G.G. Perry, "History of the English Church" (1861)  
       Vol. I. p.259  
 3: Vide Gardiner, "Constitutional Documents" pp.99-103



or any other such harmless recreation, nor from having of May-games, Whitsun-ales, and Morris Dances; and the setting up of May-poles and other sports therewith used: so as the same be had.....without impediment or neglect of divine service.....but we do here account still as prohibited all unlawful games to be used upon Sundays, as bear and bull-baitings, interludes and at all times in the meaner sort of people.....bowling"<sup>1</sup>.

It is interesting to notice James' reasons for issuing this order. There are four: the fear lest Papists might wean the people from the Anglican Church by "persuading them that no honest mirth or recreation is lawful or tolerable in our religion"; the feeling that lack of sports "barreth the common people from using such exercises as may make their bodies more able for war..."; the fact that lack of sports "sets up filthy tippling and drunkenness, and breeds a number of idle and discontented speeches in...ale-houses" - a disconcerting and dangerous thing to an autocratic king who is not too popular! Lastly, there was no Saturday afternoon holiday in those days, and James said: "When shall the common people have leave to exercise, if not upon the Sundays and Holy-days, seeing that most apply their labour

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1: cp. 33 Henry VIII Cap. X. 11.

and win their living in all working days?"<sup>1</sup>

Puritan opinion on this matter however did not coincide with the King's. Abbott<sup>2</sup>, the Archbishop, whose sympathies were largely on the Puritan side, refused to read the 'Declaration of Sports' from his pulpit, and it was never generally accepted. Charles I, however, in spite of the Act of 1625 - his first Parliament - re-issued the 'Book of Sports' in 1633 because, as he said, "we find that under pretence of taking away abuses, there hath been a general forbidding not only of ordinary meetings, (for sports) but of the Feast of the Dedication of the churches, commonly called Wakes".

Puritan strictness was evidently tightening and going beyond the Act of 1625, and it was this tendency to forbid and banish every kind of sport and amusement on the Sabbath which made the Long Parliament - predominantly Puritan - interpret the Act of 1625 in the terms described by Neal.<sup>3</sup> The same parliament in 1643 caused the 'Book of Sports' to be publicly burnt, and forbade all persons under penalty of five shillings to be present on the Lord's day at any wrestling, shooting, bowling, ringing of bells for pleasure

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1: Vide Gardiner, "Constitutional Docs". pp. 100-101 .  
 2: Neal, "Puritans", Vol. II. p. 106  
 3: Vide Supra, p. 174.

masques, wakes, church-ales, games, dancing or other pastime<sup>1</sup>. Organs, as monuments of idolatry, along with Statues, Gopes, Surplices, Roods and Altars were to be removed from the churches<sup>2</sup>. Earlier in the same year this parliament had prohibited the Stationer's Company from printing any books without licence from the house<sup>3</sup>. And in 1647 it forbade all stage plays and interludes, and actors discovered at plays were to be committed to prison as rogues and the money taken for admission was to be forfeited, and the spectators fined five shillings<sup>4</sup>. And all Church Festivals were abolished the same year, and instead of these holy-days it was enacted that the second Tuesday in each month should be observed as a general holiday. Shops were to be closed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. but shop-assistants, if they "riotously spend or abuse such day of Recreation, either to (their) own hurt, or the damage of (their) Master" might forfeit their right to the next monthly holiday. This power was granted to the Master. And if they "cause any riotous or tumultuous assembly, to the disturbance of the Peace..... any corporal punishment, by imprisonment or otherwise" may be inflicted on them. And such servants and apprentices were forbidden under penalty to be found in "Taverns, ale-houses

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1: Vide Scobell "Acts and Ordinances" (1658) Part I  
 2: Ibid I. p. 69 pp. 68-69  
 3: Ibid, pt I. pp. 44,45; & 134.  
 4: Ibid, Pt. I. pp. 135, 143.

or Gaming houses" after 8 p.m. or to be "drunk or otherwise disorderly".<sup>1</sup>

In 1650, September 27th, the Rump or Independent remnant of the Long Parliament repealed all the Acts of Elizabeth which enforced with penalties uniformity in worship according to the Anglican rites,<sup>2</sup> but it didn't leave the matter of church attendance to the whim of the individual. One clause of this Act reads: "And to the end that no Profane or Licentious persons may take occasion by the repealing of the said Laws.....to neglect the performance of Religious Duties, be it further enacted.....that all and every person.....shall.....upon every Lord's Day, days of Public Thanksgiving and Humiliation.....resort to some Public Place where the Service and Worship of God is exercised....."<sup>3</sup> And on the previous April (19th) an Act had been passed forbidding on the Lord's day or on days of humiliation the crying or sale of goods, travelling by boat or vehicle, except to and from church; frequenting a "Tavern, Inn, Alehouse, Tobacco-house or shop, or Victualling-house, unless lodging there; dancing and grinding corn, except the latter was a case of necessity. Offences against these laws involved a fine or a few hours

- 1: Scobell, Part I. p. 128
- 2: Ibid. Part II. pp 131-132.
- 3. Ibid. p. 132.

in the stocks.<sup>1</sup> An Act was also passed on May 10th this year against incest and adultery which were adjudged felony and were punishable by death. Fornication involved the offender - man or woman - in a penalty of three months imprisonment for the first offence. "For being a common Bawd, be it man or woman, or wittingly keeping a common brothel", the penalty was whipping, the pillory and branding on the forehead with the letter B. and three years in a house of correction until they shall put in sufficient securities for their good behaviour". If afterwards convicted, the penalty was a felon's death<sup>2</sup>. On August 9th profane cursing and swearing were made punishable with various penalties according to the social standing of the offender<sup>3</sup>, and a few days later it was enacted that holders of Atheistical opinions, and those who declare that "Unrighteousness in persons, or the Acts of Uncleaness" such as "Profane Swearing, Drunkenness and the like Filthiness and Brutishness, are not unholy and forbidden in the Word of God", shall be imprisoned for six months for the first offence and banished for the second<sup>4</sup>. Duels were also forbidden<sup>5</sup>, and horse-racing was forbidden for six months from July 1654.<sup>6</sup>

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- 1: Scobell, Part II. pp. 119-121  
 2: Ibid, pp. 121,122.  
 3: Ibid, p. 123.  
 4: Ibid, pp. 124-126.  
 5: Ibid, pp. 319-320.  
 6: Ibid, p. 321.

Such then was the moral legislation of the Puritans both under the Presbyterians and the Independents. To them it seemed both right and necessary to interfere with the private and social conduct of individuals when that conduct was offensive to their ideals of what was right and good. Unfortunately laws do not create good men, but they may create both dissemblers and those whose disaffection for the law urges them to the opposite extreme. And there seems little doubt that the moral relaxation and excesses which followed the Restoration in 1660, were to a large extent the inevitable reaction to the Puritan restrictive legislation of the previous twenty years. Laws may suppress conduct, but they do not sublimate desires. And therefore instead of elevating character, they may even cause it to deteriorate, by breeding discontent if the suppression continues, or by inducing subtle evasions of the law which lead to a double life. In 1673 John Milton published a tract in which he mentions the moral condition of the people after the Restoration. "It is a general complaint", he writes, "that this nation of late years is grown more numerous and excessively vicious than heretofore; pride, luxury, drunkenness, whoredom, cursing, swearing, bold and open atheism everywhere abounding".<sup>1</sup>

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1: "Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration", Prose Works (Bohn<sup>3</sup>) Vol. II. p. 518.

English people from time immemorial had been accustomed to Sports and Pastimes on the Sabbath day. The Roman Church, which was also the patron of the miracle and morality plays, had sanctioned pastimes on the Sunday after divine service. Anglicanism had followed Rome in this as in many other matters. To men and women accustomed to such amusements on the Sabbath the Puritan denunciation of them must therefore have not merely sounded strange, but have appeared as an interference with long established rights. And whether Sports and Pastimes on the Sabbath are legitimate, and in the best interests of the moral and spiritual life, or not, is still a vexed question; but considering the long traditions on this matter, which had been interfered with by the Puritans, we can understand the attitude, say, of Dr Pierce, Bishop of Bath and Wells, who after the Restoration of Anglicanism defended the 'Book of Sports' in 1663. "After Church", he writes, "the people went to their sports and pastimes in the church-yard, or in some public-house where they drank and made merry. Under the influence of beer their liberality expanded, and they collected money for such objects as re-casting the church bells, called church-ales, maintaining the Parish Clerk, called Clerk-ales, setting up a poor parishoner which was called bidale".<sup>1</sup> The Bishop's motives for the restitution of the

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1: Vide Neal, "History of the Puritans", Vol.II. pp.214-215

good old ways do not seem to have been disinterested, nevertheless he had no qualms on the moral issue.

The Puritans however were too much in the grip of the Old Testament law to compromise about Sabbath observance. Richard Baxter tells us that in his village, High Ercall, in Shropshire, after the reader had read the Common Prayer briefly, "the rest of the Day, even till Dark Night almost... ..was spent in Dancing under a May Pole and a great Tree", and that "many times my mind was inclined to be among them, and sometimes I broke loose from Conscience and joyned with them; and the more I did it, the more was I enclined to it".<sup>1</sup> But he was broken off this habit by hearing the people speak of his father, who was a good Anglican, as a Puritan. "It did much", he says, "to cure me and alienate me from them". And by comparison he was convinced that "Godly People were the best, and those that despised them and lived in Sin and Pleasure, were a malignant unhappy sort of People: and this kept me out of their company. Except now and then when the Love of Sports and Plays enticed me".<sup>2</sup>

"When I heard them speak scornfully of others as Puritans whom I never knew", writes Baxter, "I was at first apt to believe all the lies and slanders wherewith they loaded them. But when I heard my own father so reproached,

1: Reliquiae Baxterianae (1696) p. 2  
 2: Ibid. p. 3



and perceived the drunkards were forwardest in the reproach, I perceived it was mere malice. For my father never scrupled Common-Prayer or ceremonies, nor spoke against the Bishops, nor even so much as prayed but by a book or form, being not even acquainted with any that did otherwise. But only for reading Scripture when the rest were dancing on the Lord's Day, and for praying (by a form out of the end of the Common Prayer Book) in his house, and for reprovng drunkards and swearers, and for talking sometimes a few words of Scripture and the life to come, he was reviled commonly by the name of Puritan, Precision, Hypocrite; and so were the godly conformable ministers that lived anywhere in the country near us, not only by our neighbours, but by the common talk of the vulgar rabble of all about us".<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to observe that though Baxter became a strong opponent of Sabbath-breaking in the Puritan sense, yet he seems to have been led to this position not by an Early Puritan training merely, but also by rational observation of the moral effects on character of each way of life.

Games and amusements however came to be regarded by the Puritans as wrong not only on the Sabbath, but at any time. Later in life Baxter, in spite of his childhood's mistakes,

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1: Reliquiae Baxterianae, pp. 2-3

writes with evident feelings of thankfulness;

"Nor have I ever been much tempted to any of the sins which go under the name of Pastimes". The same writer has to confess however that he was guilty of another kind of sin:

"I was extremely bewitched with a Love of Romances, Fables and old Tales, which corrupted my Affections and lost my time"<sup>1</sup> Edmund Gosse in "Father and Son" tells us that in his childhood fairy tales and all fiction were kept from him because they were lies. And it would seem that this was partly the ground of Baxter's objection to them, together with the fact that such reading was a waste of precious God-given time that should be put to more serious business. And sports and amusements were also a trifling with time in which the individual should be employed in something useful. "Life is real, life is earnest", as a later Puritan, Longfellow, wrote, was the ever present thought with the majority of Puritans. The world came to be conceived of as a "Vanity Fair", in which silly and foolish souls were bewitched by its pleasures and allurements to the eternal danger of their soul, while the wise and wary conquered the temptations by closing their heart against all the fascinating bye-paths which might lure them from the "narrow way" which led to life.

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1: Reliquiae Baxterianae" p. 2.

"The Calls of approaching Death at one Ear" writes Baxter, "And the Questionings of a doubtful Conscience at the other,.....made the world seem to me as a carkass that has neither Life nor Lovliness: and it destroyed those Ambitions desires after Literate Fame, which was the sin of my childhood! I had a desire before to have attained the highest Academical Degrees and Reputation of Learning, and to have chosen out my Studies accordingly: but Sickness and Solicitousness for my doubting Soul did shame away all these Thoughts as Fooleries and Children's Plays".<sup>1</sup>

This Puritan's alternative to sports, fiction and the simple pleasures of life, and his method of employing one's leisure hours in a manner well-pleasing to God, may perhaps be gathered from a practice he adopted and encouraged among his parishoners at Kidderminster. "Every Thursday evening", he writes, "my Neighbours that were most desirous and had opportunity, met at my House, and there one of them repeated the Sermon (of the previous Sunday) and afterwards they proposed what Doubts any of them had about the Sermon, or any Case of Conscience, and I resolved their Doubts; And last of all I caused sometimes one, and sometimes another of them to Pray.....and sometimes I prayed with them myself; which (beside singing a Psalm) was all they did.

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1: Reliquiae Baxterianae; I. p. 5

And once a Week also some of the younger sort who were not fit to pray in so great an assembly, met among a few, more privately, where they spent three Hours in Prayer together...<sup>1</sup>

Yet this same man who hated strolling players at Wakes, who could speak of the "odious swinish sin of tipling and drunkenness", who catalogued sins by the hundred<sup>2</sup>, and whose discipline in his own parish was such that, as Dr Powicke remarks, "...the town cannot have<sup>been</sup> an easy place for the natural man"<sup>3</sup>, could nevertheless condone slavery and sanction gambling and betting. To the question, "Is it lawful to lay Wagers upon Horse-races, Dogs, Hawks, Bear-baitings, etc", he answers, "Yes, if.....it be no greater a sum than can be demanded and paid, without breach of charity, or too much hurt to the loser.....That it be no other but what both parties are truly willing to stand to the loss of.....That it be not an exercise which is itself unlawful, by cruelty to Beasts, or hazard to the lives of men,..... or by the expence of an undue proportion of time....."<sup>4</sup>

Is it too much to suggest that because slavery was known and not condemned in the Bible, and betting was not mentioned in that Book of books, that Baxter adopted this attitude?

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- 1: Reliquiae Baxterianae: I. p. 83
- 2: Baxter, "A Christian Directory".
- 3: F. J. Powicke, "Life of Rev. Richard Baxter", p. 109.
- 4: Baxter, "A Christian Directory", Part IV. p.210 Tit.5

His reasoning would seem to point to this solution. A man must be ruled in these matters by charity (Biblical) - what a man can afford to lose, and kindness to animals and men; and by a not undue waste of time - again Biblical, as in the parable of the Talents, etc.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact this is what the Puritans mostly did. The Bible was their textbook, their compendium on morals. It came before reason and common-sense, or even enlightened sense. They were slaves to it, and yet they missed its real meaning, because as literalists they placed the Old Testament on the same authoritative plane with the New Testament, and either forgot, or failed to comprehend that Christ came to abrogate the law by inculcating a spirit.

In 1656 an Act was passed to punish at the house of correction and then to set to work "lewd and dissolute Persons.....(who) live at very high Rates and great Expenses, having no visible Estate, Profession or Calling.....to maintain themselves in their licentious, loose and ungodly practices, (but) do make it their Trade and Livelyhood to Cheat, Debayst, Cozen and deceive the Young Gentry.....<sup>2</sup> And by the same Act the winning of money "by playing at cards, dice, tables, tennis, bowles, or shovel board,

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- 1: It is surprising that Baxter tolerated betting in view of the fact that he confesses it was one of the sins of his childhood. "I was somewhat excessively addicted to play, and that with covetousness, for money".  
Reliquae Baxterianae, Bk.I. p.2. cp. P.12.
- 2: Scobell, Part II. p.500.

Cock-fighting, or by Horse-races, or any Game or Games..."<sup>1</sup> was made illegal. And half the money won in this manner had to be paid to the Lord Protector, and the other half went back to the loser.

What about Mr Baxter's ruling on this matter? It would seem that what was aimed at in this Act was the suppression of the professional gambler who made a good living out of it. The private individual, who occasionally put money on horses, cards, etc. might still have his flutter as Baxter suggests.

Not all the Puritans, however, adopted this narrow Biblical and unreasonable attitude to life. John Milton, who however was more than a Puritan - more modern and more reasonable, would allow much more latitude to man's reasonable desires than most of the Puritans. Writing about the "Book of Sports", he said: "I am sure that they took the ready way to despoil us both of manhood and grace at once, and that in the shamefullest and ungodliest manner, upon the day which God's law, and even our own reason hath consecrated, that we might have one day, at least, of seven set apart wherein to examine and increase our knowledge of God, to meditate and commune on our faith, our hope, our Eternal City in heaven, and to quicken withal our study and exercise of charity;

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1: Scobell, Part II. p.501.

at such a time, that men should be plucked from their soberest and saddest thoughts, and by bishops, the pretended fathers of the church, instigated by public edict, and with earnest endeavour pushed forward to gaming, jigging, wassailing and mixed dancing, is a horror to think. Thus did the reprobate hireling priest, Baalam, seek to subdue the Israelites to Moab, if not by force, then by this devilish policy, to draw them from the sanctuary of God to the luxurious and ribald feast of Baal-peor".<sup>1</sup>

Yet Milton who believed in Sabbath observance as a means of grace through worship, was not averse to sports and amusements in themselves. To him they were good and necessary, and instead of prohibiting them and leaving the masses with a vacant leisure, he would have organized games etc. and taught the people how to spend their leisure hours pleasantly and profitably.

"It were happy for the Commonwealth", he writes, "if our magistrates, as in those famous governments of old, would take into their care, not only the deciding of our contentious law-cases and brawls, but the managing of our public sports and festival pastimes; that they might be not such as were authorized a while since, the provocations of drunkenness and lust, but such as may inure and harden our

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1: "Of Reformation in England", Milton's Prose Works,  
(Ed. C. Symmons, 1806) Vol. I. p.40

bodies.....may civilize, adorn, and make discreet our minds by the learned and affable meeting of frequent academies, and the procurement of wise and artful recitations, sweetened with elegant and graceful enticements to the love and practice of justice, temperance, and fortitude, instructing and bettering the nation at all opportunities, that the call of wisdom and virtue may be heard everywhere, as Solomon saith: "she crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, in the top of high places, in the chief concourse, and in the openings of the gates".<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless it is the Puritan who speaks here - the Puritan who hates not only the gross sins of life but the foolish trivialities which are a waste of time and of God-given opportunities for the improvement of self.

A recent writer<sup>2</sup> who is by no means in sympathy with the Puritans, maintains that some at least of the prohibitive Acts of the Long Parliament were called forth by the fear of riots and plots when large gatherings of men assembled for games and sports. And so it would appear from the ordinance of 1654 prohibiting meetings "under the pretence of Matches for Cock-Fighting, found to tend to the disturbance of the Public Peace and are commonly accompanied with Gaming, Drinking, Swearing and Quarreling and other dissolute Practices

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1: "The Reason of Church Government" Milton's Prose Works, (Bohn) Vol. II. p. 480.

2: Storm Jameson "The Decline of Merry England" (1930) p.190



to the Dishonour of God".<sup>1</sup> During the disturbed years of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, wherever men collected together in large numbers, there was the possibility of conflict between rival factions, and the possibility of germinating into vigorous life the seeds of discontent against the usurped Power of the Governor General, Cromwell. But that this was the prime object of the prohibitions we do not believe, since cock-fighting, bear-baiting, theatres, etc. were more evil in themselves to the Puritan mind than church-ales, Morris dances and the rest of the moral evils which they condemned. And bear and bull baiting were forbidden long before this period, viz, by the Act of 1625. It must be confessed that there was a gloomy and joy-killing spirit in the Puritan which filled him with the righteous indignation and fiery denunciation of the Hebrew prophet, at the very appearance or suggestion of evil. Perhaps it was because he spent so much time in that prophetic company, and brooded on the follies of the people which he magnified into sins. His theology of course did not help him to be cheerful or to compromise with evil. He had learnt his theology in the school of Calvin, and the theocratic state of Geneva was the kind of theocracy he would impose on England. His God was the absolute sovereign over Nature and the moral world, and the stern judge and enemy of un-righteousness.

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1: Scobell, "Acts & Ordinances" pt.II pp.283.

Sinners were reprobate and destined to eternal punishment, and the natural man was a sinner. But there was a way of escape. Predestination was not the unalterable arbitrary law which some people have believed. Man's will, though wholly disabled by sin, could be restored to freedom and goodness by the grace of God, if man will only put himself into line with God's purposes. And it seems to us that the Puritans' arbitrariness, and their eagerness to enforce their ideals on the nation derived something of its zeal and intolerance from their contemplation of the inexorable majesty of God.

There was also no doubt a touch of pride and arrogance about the Puritans, due to their consciousness of being of the "Elect". As the Platonist, John Smith said, they "grow big and swell into a mighty bulk, with airy fancies and presumption of being in acceptance with God".<sup>1</sup> Yet their motive in the last resort was soteriological. They would save the sinful generations from the awful penalty of their folly and sin.

This soteriological motive would seem to have animated the House of Parliament when in April 1642, it issued its declaration on the reform of the church. While stressing the necessity of the reformation of the government and liturgy of Anglicanism, they went on to say, "because this will never

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1: John Smith, "Select Discourses", 1673. (Ed. 1859) p.343.

of itself attain the end sought therein, they will therefore use their utmost endeavour to establish learned and preaching ministers.....throughout the whole kingdom, wherein many dark corners are miserably destitute of the means of salvation....."<sup>1</sup> And when Cromwell met his first Parliament in July, 1653, the same purpose seemed to be in his mind. He said: "I think I need not advise, much less press you, to endeavour the Promoting of the Gospel; to encourage the Ministry; such a Ministry and Such Ministers as be faithful in the Land; upon whom the true character is. Men that have received the Spirit, which Christians will be able to discover, and do 'the will of'....."<sup>2</sup> And in the same speech he said to the members of the House: "And give me leave to say: If I know anything in the world, what is there likelier to win the People to the interests of Jesus Christ, to the love of Godliness (and therefore what stronger duty lies on you, being thus called), than an humble and godly conversation?.....At least you convince them that, as men fearing God have fought them out of their bondage under the Regal Power, so men fearing God do now rule them in the fear of God, and take care to administer Good unto them".<sup>3</sup>

Material good however is generally preferred to moral good, and especially when the latter is of the sombre and

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1: "Journals of the House of Lords", Vol.IV. p.706.  
 2: Carlyle, "Cromwell's Letters & Speeches" (Chelsea Edition)  
 3: Ibid. p.355 p.353

restrictive kind which the Puritans sought to impose. Nevertheless the Puritans' moral influence, or the moral conception of religion which they emphasised, did not altogether fail to mould the inner life of thought and feeling in a large number of England's sons and daughters. And it seems to the writer that the impact of Puritanism on English character, while varying naturally with different temperaments, has produced two outstanding types.

John Bunyan may be taken as the representative of one type - those who are hyper-sensitive to little sins and failings, which they magnify to the dimensions of the sin against the Holy Spirit.

Bunyan's consciousness of guilt, and his deep soul-yearnings to find salvation, have been vividly described by himself in "Grace Abounding". As Baillie says, "For him the only purpose and meaning of existence was the salvation of his own soul; nothing else was of vital importance at all. And what was true for him seemed to be true for all men. Their chief and, in the long run, their only object in life was to find salvation on the prescribed terms, and, having found it, to lead a human life wholly governed by the constant thought of their consecration for this end and of the life of the world to come. Nature and history were parables, figures and illustrations of this divinely determined purpose for man; and they had no value or meaning for their own sake

The earth was designed as the habitation of man where his religious destiny could be enacted; the place of opportunity for deciding the divine issues of life. Life was merely a pilgrimage from this world to the next. The world was neither a home nor a school, but a battlefield for the spirit of man. The pursuit of knowledge and truth for its own sake, the creation and the delight in beauty for its own sake, were either irrelevant or incidental in the plan of life; the realm of business was a Vanity Fair. The only sphere of real interest that mattered, apart from religion, was the moral life; and this only because the divine righteousness demanded from the delivered soul a corresponding inner and outer righteousness of life.....Devotion to and communion with the divine goodness purified the goodness of daily life, illustrated it and confirmed it".<sup>1</sup>

Bunyan, however, must not be taken as the true or dominant type of Puritan character. Not all Puritans regarded the world as a "Vanity Fair", or life as merely a pilgrimage from this world to the next. The Puritan could be a man of affairs, interested in the arts and in culture, and not altogether averse to the simple pleasures of life. Bunyan must be qualified by Cromwell and Milton. And perhaps in Colonel Hutchinson we see the ideal type of Puritan character.

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1: Prof. J. B. Baillie, "The Mind of John Bunyan",  
Hibbert Journal, April 1929, pp. 401-402.

He was not an ascetic who spurned the world in fear of the wrath to come, but a man who delighted in the world and was busy in its affairs. Yet a man in whom there "was a true, wise and religious government of the desires and delight he took in the things he enjoyed".

And we put forward this trusty soldier who served under Cromwell as the second type of character created by Puritanism. Like John Milton, he was no lover of cloistered virtues, nor a narrow pietistic kill-joy. Here is a first-hand portrait - perhaps a little biased - since it comes from the pen of one who was too much enamoured of him to be conscious of his faults, or at least, to publish any such faults to the world - namely from his widow.

"Piety being still the bond of all his other virtues", she writes, "there was nothing he durst not do or suffer, but sin against God".<sup>1</sup> "His whole life was the rule of temperance in meat, drink, apparel, pleasure, and all those things that may be lawfully enjoyed; and herein his temperance was more excellent than in others, in whom it is not so much a virtue, but proceeds from want of appetite <sup>or</sup> lust of pleasure; in him it was a true, wise and religious government of the desires and delight he took in the things he enjoyed. He had a certain activity of spirit which could

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1: Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson (Ed. Firth 1906) p. 27

never endure idleness either in himself or others, and that made him eager for the time he indulged it, as well in pleasure as in business.<sup>1</sup> He was apt for any bodily exercise.....he could dance admirably well, but neither in youth nor riper years made a practice of it: he had skill in fencing such as became a gentleman, he had a great love of music, and often diverted himself with a viol, on which he played masterly; he had an exact ear and judgment in other music; had great judgment in paintings, gravings, sculpture, and all liberal arts, and had many curiosities of value in all kinds: wonderfully neat, cleanly and genteel in habits (dress), and had a very good fancy in it; but he left off early the wearing of anything that was costly, yet in his plainest, negligent habit appeared very much a gentleman: his conversation was very pleasant, for he was naturally cheerful, had a ready wit and apprehension.....everything that it was necessary for him to do, he did with delight, free and unconstrained.....he was as kind a father, as dear a brother, as good a master, as faithful a friend as the world had".<sup>2</sup>

Colonel Hutchinson nevertheless was a strict disciplinarian. In his orders to the garrison at Nottingham, "fines for drinking on the Sabbath were levied not only on the offenders, but also on the tavern keepers, who, on a second

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1: Ibid. p. 29  
2: Ibid. p. 26

offence lost their licence. For tippling after 9 p.m. when the "Taptoo" beat, the fine was 2/6d, and for drinking in quarters after the Taptoo, 2/-. Every drunken man was fined 5/- and the man who sold him liquor was fined. The fine on oaths was 3d". "Anyone.....found idly standing or walking in the streets in sermon-time, or playing at any games on the Sabbath or Fast-day.....shall pay 2/6d or suffer imprisonment till he pay the same".<sup>1</sup>

A religious government of life, with a passion for righteousness, which derived its inspiration from a belief in a Holy God, was the one thing common to the Puritan character. As Baillie says of Bunyan: "He knew what was in man and what was not, what came from man and what could not. However much he can achieve, man cannot rise above himself by his own efforts. There is a natural world and there is a spiritual world. And Bunyan knew that the fruits of the Spirit - transcendent love, joy, peace, faith, meekness - are not of man's contriving and are not of this world. They are the gifts of grace, and the sign and symbol of the presence of the divine Spirit in human existence, states of man's soul in which he communes with the soul of all souls and safeguard of the world".<sup>2</sup>

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- 1: Vide Traill "Social England" Vol. IV. p. 312  
 2: J.B. Baillie "The Mind of John Bunyan". p.405.



And it was such a faith, bearing fruits of an ethical quality, that Puritanism preserved during the years of Anglican formalism under Elizabeth and the early Stuarts, and which it handed on as a rich legacy to posterity.

Puritanism gave to the English character a new seriousness in its approach to life and a bias towards righteousness. And it is largely because of those tendencies that English people<sup>1</sup> from the seventeenth century onward, have been more progressive than their neighbours in Catholic countries and more keenly interested in social reform. These differences are nowhere more strikingly apparent than in Ireland. The North is industrious and rich: the South easy-going and poor. The North is largely abreast of the times in social consciousness and social reforms. The South lags behind. And the explanation of these differences is not altogether temperamental but one of character and outlook.

And it is a singular thing that in Britain and America - the child of English Puritanism - the standard of life among the working-classes is higher than in other countries, and the hours of labour are fewer.

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1: The term British might have been used here, except that it includes the people of Southern Ireland. The Scots and the people of North Ireland, as Presbyterians and thorough-going protestants, possessed the same religious and moral zeal as the Puritans, and have been equally progressive.

And these two nations are increasingly manifesting themselves as the most sincere and single-minded advocates of peace and international friendship. Is it too much to say that behind these movements, and perhaps the cause of them, is to be found the old Puritan urge towards righteousness and freedom?

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CHAPTER THREE.  
-----THE CONTRIBUTION OF PURITANISM TO RELIGIOUS AND  
POLITICAL LIBERTY.

When Elizabeth came to the throne progress towards liberty had not advanced as far in the sphere of religion as in the sphere of politics. In the fourteenth century the rights of parliament to free speech and self-rule had been acknowledged, and the House of Commons from that time had possessed its own Speaker, and had taken upon itself the task of raising money for the Ruler's requirements. Moreover, though the Commons did not make laws, they claimed the right to petition the Monarch re reforms, and if he and the Lords granted the petition, it was then enrolled as an Act of Parliament. It was thus the custom at the opening of every Parliament during Elizabeth's reign for the Commons to claim the right of free speech, freedom from arrest, and freedom for their Speaker to interview the Queen on matters pertaining to the business of the House.

In religion however the individual had at this period no rights but only duties. He must worship in the manner prescribed by authority. This had been the custom from time immemorial. The Roman Church had never allowed freedom of thought or practice in matters of religion to go unchallenged.

And while in England there had been men like Wyclif and Tindale, who were impatient with the ex-cathedra utterances of Rome, and vexed by the unexemplary lives of priests, and who attempted, by giving the Scriptures to the people, to induce them to think for themselves, the authority of the Church had never been seriously questioned by the people as a whole. When Henry VIII threw off the yoke of the Pope, there was no intention in his mind of relaxing the authority of the church over the minds of individuals. Changes in particular beliefs might be entertained, but, if accepted, they must be enforced on the whole Nation. He was 'Supreme Head of the Church', and what was decreed in matters of religion must be enforced with the same thoroughness and persistency as were other enactments of the law.

On the whole this was expected and looked for by the people. The idea of liberty in matters of religion - individuals believing and worshipping in different ways according to their own conscience - was undreamt of, if not offensive to thought and imagination. When for instance the Protestant Reformation began to set 'its house in order' in the reign of Edward VI, the intention was that the Articles and Prayer-Book should define and focus the beliefs and opinions generally held by the whole nation, and the practices in worship observed by them. It was an impossible idea of

course. Nevertheless Romanists were outside the law and in danger of its penalties. The same was true in the next reign as many Protestants found to their cost during the Catholic reaction under Mary Tudor. Liberty in religion, in our sense of the word, there was none, and it is doubtful if such a notion was ever seriously entertained in those days. Whether Romanism or Protestantism was in the ascendent, the policy was the same - the enforcement of the particular conception of religion on the mind and conscience of the whole nation. The struggle for liberty in religion and politics during the period under survey was in a sense one and the same struggle. Religious aspirations influenced political thought and ideals, and political ideals in their turn helped on religious aspirations towards their goal. It is difficult therefore to separate the two. Nevertheless for the sake of clarity we shall attempt to do this. And since the religious struggle preceded the political in its inception during the counter-reformation in England, we shall speak first on the struggle for liberty in religion.

## PART      I.

### Religious Liberty.

The kind of religious settlement imposed on the nation by Elizabeth and enforced by the Act of Uniformity and zealously upheld by the ever-vigilant High Commission Court has

been described in the first part of this work. We have seen too that this settlement was offensive to the puritans, on the ground that they believed it to be unscriptural.

Not all the Puritans, however, made the same reaction to Anglicanism or their fight for liberty would not have been so protracted. There were what might be called Conservative and Radical Puritans as well as those who occupied a middle position. The Conservative Puritans were those who accepted the Anglican Settlement and hoped and worked for reforms more consonant with their ideals. This section did not question the right of the Queen's authority over the Church or the authority on which the Anglican Church was founded. Had freedom in matters of clerical dress, the Sign of the Cross in Baptism, and a few other matters that bore the taint of Popery, been allowed, Anglicanism was satisfactory to them.

The Radicals, on the other hand, resented the authority of the Queen in a matter so pertinent to the soul as religion; and they repudiated the authority of Anglicanism itself. These Puritans gradually broke away from the Established Church and formed "gathered churches". Separatism and later Independency were the logical sequence to that thinking which made religion not a matter of organisation, but of individual relationship to God. To Him alone, they argued, was a man

accountable. And therefore it seemed right, nay the only way, to separate from the Anglican organisation of religion which was to them more formal than spiritual, and which offended and crippled their zeal for a scriptural religion.

The middle position was occupied by the so-called Presbyterians. They were no less zealous than the Separatists for a spiritual religion founded on scripture. But they differed from the Separatists in that they not only remained within the State Church, but, like the Anglicans, they were prepared to accept the authority of the Queen as the head of the State Church - only, unlike the Anglicans, they desired the Church to be Presbyterian and not Episcopal in its orders and government.

The Separatists and the Presbyterians were the two parties which caused Her Majesty the most trouble, and who were always against the government of the Queen in matters of religion. They had no wish however to be disloyal, and in all things but religious conformity, they were amongst her most loyal and devoted subjects.<sup>1</sup> But as religious men they must obey God, - or the Scriptures - rather than man. "God's glory was obscured"<sup>2</sup> by Anglicanism.

When however we consider the demands put forward by the Presbyterians in their petitions to Queen and Parliament,

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1: Vide Petition to the Queen, "Seconde parte of a Register" (Ed. A. Peel), Vol. I. pp. 143-144  
 2: Ibid. p. 100.

we find that it is not liberty in matters of religious thought and practice which they desired, but merely the substitution of a new church polity which, while taking the place of Episcopacy, should be legalised and enforced with the same authority. It is true that Cartwright, the champion of the Presbyterian party, would set the Church above the State in matters pertaining to religion. He would have no interference on the part of the Civil Magistrate with the kind of polity and worship which the Church might set up. That should be determined by the Church itself. In this we feel Cartwright was right. And in this way he seems to plead for liberty in religion. But it is a very circumscribed liberty. It is liberty for the leaders in the Church to determine their own policy rather than having that policy determined and thrust upon them by the Civil arm of the State. Yet Cartwright would not grant this liberty to every body of religious opinion in the country. He didn't in his own mind grant it to Anglicanism, for he wished to overthrow that system. He only granted it in the case of his own system. His own six propositions<sup>1</sup>, and the Admonitions which were built upon them, were to his mind the ideal Scriptural plan of the Church - its orders and worship. And what he wanted was liberty to re-organize the English Church on these lines.

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1: Vide Supra, pp. 68, 69



This being done, then the Magistrate's part came in, which was to enforce this system and to punish offenders against it. It was not religious liberty for which he pleaded, but privilege to enforce what he considered a better policy in religion.

This fact is brought out in the religious struggle that took place in the Long Parliament from 1640, when Presbyterian sympathisers were in a majority in the House. Anglicanism had truly been oppressive, especially under the autocratic policy of Laud, and Romanists had been more favoured than Puritans. And the resentment of the latter was voiced in the "Root and Branch" petition presented by Alderman Pennington of London, and bearing 15,000 signatures. Its object was to press for the extirpation of episcopacy root and branch. "Whereas", it said, "the government of Archbishops and Lord Bishops, etc. hath proved very prejudicial and dangerous both to the Church and Commonwealth.....We therefore most humbly pray and beseech this honourable Assembly, the premises considered, that the said Government, with all its dependencies, roots and branches, may be abolished".<sup>1</sup>

After the matter had occupied the attention of the

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1: Rushworth "Historical Collections" (1691) Pt.III.  
pp. 93-96.

House for some time, and met with not a little opposition especially in the Lords<sup>1</sup>, Sir Edward Dering moved, on May 27th, for "the utter abolishing and taking away of all Archbishops, Bishops, their Chancellors and Commissaries, Deans and Chapters, Archdeacons.....and all other their under officers".<sup>2</sup>

In spite of strong opposition from Mr Edward Hyde and his Anglican party, the Bill passed the second reading, the House agreeing to the preamble which declared that episcopal government "hath been found by long experience to be a great impediment to the perfect reformation and growth of religion, and very prejudicial to the civil state and government of this Kingdom". And a few days later (June 15th) the House voted, "That Deans and Chapters, Archdeacons, Prebendaries, Canons, etc. should be utterly abolished and taken away out of the Church".<sup>3</sup>

What brought the Lords ultimately to the side of the Commons, and led to the passing of the "Exclusion Bill", however, was the action of the Bishops themselves. Fearing to venture to the House of Lords because of the angry mob, the Bishops claimed that the proceedings during their

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1: Ibid. pp. 184-186.

2: Ibid. pp. 278-279.

3: Ibid. p. 283. Vide 16 Caroli I. Cap. 27, "Statutes at Large", Vol. IV. pp. 831-832.

absence were null and void. This the Lords resented, and they sent to the Commons demanding their support against this attack on the dignity of Parliament. The Commons replied by impeaching the Bishops and committing them either to the Tower or Black Rod.<sup>1</sup>

The autocracy of the Presbyterians who had removed the Anglicans or Episcopalians for being autocratic is seen moreover in the Westminster Assembly of Divines.

The lovers of the Presbyterian polity were in the majority. The Assembly had been summoned by Parliament with the commission "that such a government shall be settled in the Church, as may be most agreeable to God's Holy Word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland, and other reformed Churches abroad". And the Assembly was "to consult and advise of such matters and things.....as shall be proposed unto them by both or either of the Houses of Parliament, and to give their advice and counsel therein to both or either of the said Houses,<sup>when</sup> and as often as they shall be thereunto required".<sup>2</sup>

Following out its commission the Assembly of Divines began the task of preparing a Confession of Faith, a Catechism

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1: Rushworth, Ibid, Pt.III. pp. 467-469.

2: Scobell, "Acts and Ordinances" (1658) Pt.I. p. 42 f.

and an Order of Worship to take the place of the Prayer-Book. On the 13th of March, 1645, Parliament gave its consent to the "Directory of Worship",<sup>1</sup> and on the 23rd of August passed an Ordinance for its enforced use.<sup>2</sup> Ministers who failed to use the "Directory" were to be fined forty shillings for each offence<sup>3</sup>, and if they made use of the Book of Common-Prayer, the penalty was £5 for the first offence, £10 for the second and a year's imprisonment for the third<sup>4</sup>.

And their intolerance was later manifested in a supreme fashion by the proposal, which fortunately did not mature, to fix the death-penalty to a denial of the Incarnation and Trinity<sup>5</sup>.

There seems no doubt however that the Presbyterian party was animated by what they conceived to be the loftiest motives - viz, the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures. And it is more than likely that they would have resented the imputation of intolerance. They had overthrown Episcopacy, and now intended to substitute the polity for which the Admonitionists had contended, and which Travers had delineated in the "Explicatio". But their reason for doing so was even stronger now than in the days of Cartwright. Episcopacy

- 1: Scobell, Ibid. p. 75 f
- 2: Ibid. p.81
- 3: Ibid. p.81
- 4: Ibid. p.81
- 5: Ibid. pp.149-150.

under the guidance of Archbishop Laud had not merely been tyrannical, but it had moved further away than ever from the Puritan ideal, and in their eyes nearer and nearer to Rome. Conformity to the ritual of Episcopacy was enforced with thoroughness, the Communion Table was transferred to the east end of the church altar-wise and ritual was made more important than preaching.<sup>1</sup> Many puritans had suffered severely for their non-conformity, the extreme instance of this being Alexander Leighton, who was fined £10,000, imprisoned, and had his nose slit and ears cut off. His offence, however, was not mere nonconformity, but condemnation of Laud's policy which he published under the title, "Sion's Plea against the Prelacy".

The attitude of the Presbyterian party against Episcopacy comes out in the "Grand Remonstrance" which the Long Parliament submitted to Charles I in December 1641.<sup>2</sup> In the 'Petition' which accompanied it, the House suggested that Rome was behind the late Episcopal zeal for ritual. "We have reason to believe", they said, "that those malignant parties, whose proceedings evidently appear

- 1: Vide Hutton (W.H.) "History of Eng. Ch. from Acc. of Ch. I." (1903) pp. 43-48 etc.  
 Vide also "The King's Declaration prefixed to the Articles of Religion", and the "Resolutions on Religion drawn up by the Commons". Gardiner, "Constitutional Docs". pp.75-83.
- 2: Rushworth, "Historical Collections" (1680)  
 Vol. IV. pp. 437-451.

to be mainly for the advantage and increase of Popery, is composed, set up, and acted by the subtile practice of the Jesuits and other engineers and factors for Rome....." And they requested that the Bishops be deprived of their votes in Parliament, and that "their immoderate Power -- over the Clergy, and other your good subjects, which they have perniciously abused to the hazard of religion" be abridged. They demanded also that "some oppressions and unnecessary ceremonies by which divers weak consciences have been scrupled" be removed.

In the "Remonstrance" itself they blame the "Jesuited Priests", the "Bishops, and the corrupt part of the Clergy who cherish formality and superstition....the supports of their own ecclesiastical tyranny". It is they who have suppressed "the purity and power of religion and such persons as were best affected to it". And these people "who were most officious in promoting superstition, most virulent in railing against godliness and honesty", soonest obtained preferment. And these are accused of attempting to root the Puritans out of the kingdom with force or drive them out by fear, while "The Popish party enjoyed such exemptions from penal law as amounted to a toleration, besides many other encouragements and court favours".

And when the House said, "Many excellent laws and provisions are in preparation for removing the inordinate

power, vexation and usurpation of Bishops, for reforming the pride and idleness of many of the Clergy, for easing the people of unnecessary ceremonies in religion, for censuring and removing unworthy and unprofitable ministers, and for maintaining godly and diligent preachers through the kingdom,"<sup>1</sup> we cannot but feel they were animated by the highest of motives. And the same motive was behind the Act which abolished the Power of the Bishops in the House of Lords, and disestablished the Episcopal Church. "What can we the Commons (do) without the conjunction of the House of Lords, and what conjunctions can we expect there, when the Bishops and recusant lords are so numerous.....They infuse into the people that we mean to abolish all Church government, and leave every man to his own fancy for the service and worship of God....."<sup>2</sup> But that was far from the Presbyterian Puritans' intention. And the fact that the very idea of leaving every man to his own fancy in matters of religion seemed so frightful a thing to Episcopalian and Presbyterian, shews how far both these peoples were from grasping the essential principles of liberty. Such an undreamt of notion was forthwith contradicted. "We do here declare that it is far from our purpose or desire to let loose the golden reins of discipline and government in

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1: "Remonstrance", Sect, 137

2: Ibid. Sections, 181, 182

the Church, to leave private persons or particular congregations to take up what form of Divine Service they please, for we hold it requisite that there should be throughout the whole realm a conformity to that order which the laws enjoin according to the Word of God. And we desire to unburthen the consciences of men of needless and superstitious ceremonies, suppress innovations, and take away the monuments of idolatry".<sup>1</sup>

The ultimate outcome of their intentions were the Acts described above<sup>2</sup>. But the setting up of Presbyterianism was not achieved without opposition, and it is noteworthy that the bid for a wider tolerance came from the Independent members of the Westminster Assembly. Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sadrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughs and William Bridge, who had arrived at the Independent position while in exile in Holland, submitted a treatise to Parliament, entitled, "An Apologetical Narration humbly submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament". This appeared while the debate about the kind of religious settlement that should be imposed was in progress. And in it they emphasised their strong opposition to the Presbyterian proposals, and pleaded for a wider freedom in worship.

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1: "Grand Remonstrance", Sec. 184.

2: Vide Supra, pp. 210-211



Their demands caused a fierce discussion in Parliament, in the Assembly, and in the Press, which Baillie, one of the Scot's Divines who attended the Assembly, said "was very apt to have kindled a fire".<sup>1</sup>

In June 1646 however the Presbyterian scheme was definitely ordered to be set up<sup>2</sup>, and in the Autumn came the Act abolishing the dignities and titles of Archbishops and Bishops, and the appropriation of their lands.<sup>3</sup> This was no doubt forced on the members of the House through fear that Charles I, after making peace with Scotland in May of that year, might win the Scots to his side against the Parliament. It was clear that if the Scots were to be bound to Parliament the Presbyterian majority must have its way, and the "Solemn League and Covenant" must be embraced. This appears from the first Article in the 'Covenant': "That we shall sincerely, really and constantly,.....endeavour in our several places and callings, the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, against our common enemies;

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1: Baillie, "Letters & Journals" (Ed. Bannatyne Club)  
Vol. II. p. 130

2: Whitelocke. "Memorials" (Ed. 1734) p. 215, Hetherington  
"History of the Westminster Assembly", pp.273-4

3: Scobell, "Acts & Ordinances", Vol. I. p.99

the reformation of religion in the Kingdoms of England and Ireland in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, according to the Word of God, and the example of the best reformed Churches; and we shall endeavour to bring the Churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of Church Government, directory for worship and catechising, that we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us".<sup>1</sup> And in the second article of the 'Covenant' the demand is made for the extirpation of popery and prelacy, the latter being defined as "Church government by Archbishops, Bishops, their Chancellors and Commissaries, Deans, Deans and Chapters, Archdeacons, and all other Ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy", as well as the extirpation of "superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness and whatsoever shall be found to be contrary to sound doctrine....."<sup>2</sup>

But great as may have been the influence of the "Covenant" on the progress of events in religion at that time, its proposals nevertheless coincided with the wishes of the majority in the Assembly and in parliament, since

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1: Rushworth "Historical Collections", Vol. V. pp.478  
 2: Ibid, p. 478.

they interpreted the very mind and intention of Cartwright and his successors in England. Thus was Presbyterianism established as securely as Episcopacy, which it had overthrown, had been established, and in some ways it was more autocratic and intolerant. It not only prescribed the form of worship and the confession of faith, and enforced attendance at worship as Episcopal Anglicanism had done, but it did more; it presumed to regulate the sports and pastimes of the people by forbidding age-long customs and practices, and it concerned itself generally with the regulating of private and public morals.<sup>1</sup> It also styled the free exchange of opinions by forbidding the publication of books and pamphlets without the consent of parliament.<sup>2</sup> It was an attempt to prevent all opinions being aired except those which were consonant with the kind of opinions those in authority desired to see disseminated. A greater curtailment of liberty than this it is difficult to conceive of, since it places an embargo on the very expression of the spirit.

Nevertheless, while the lovers of the Presbytery seem to have missed the real meaning of liberty, and in practice to have manifested not a little intolerance, they were not without influence in securing this priceless boon to the

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1: Vide Supra, pp. 179-181.

2: Scobell, "Acts & Ordinances" Pt.I. pp. 44-45

generations yet to be. Negatively, their insistence on a uniformity of worship revealed the impossibility of such a thing, whether it be of the presbyterian, Episcopal or any other kind. Uniformity and liberty cannot dwell together. But positively, the struggles of this branch of Puritans especially in the reign of Elizabeth, before their own autocracy became apparent, helped on the cause of liberty - but chiefly in the sphere of politics - by creating in the minds of politicians a revulsion from autocracy that involves persecution. Their sufferings in Elizabeth's reign, and the reasonableness of their claims, won them a great measure of sympathy throughout the country, and not a little support in parliament. Hallam says "those that favoured them had a majority among the Protestant gentry in the Queen's days".<sup>1</sup> We can understand this if, as Neal<sup>2</sup> tells us, the deprived ministers "were received as chaplains and tutors", into the homes of the wealthy, and "not out of compassion, but from a sense of their real worth and usefulness. They were men of undissembled piety and devotion: mighty in the Scriptures, zealous for the Protestant religion: of exemplary lives; far removed from the liberties and fashionable vices of the time, and indefatigably diligent in instructing those

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1: "Constitutional History" (Ed. 1854) Vol.I. p.189 note.  
 2: "History of the Puritans" (1822) Vol.I. p. 306.

committed to their care". And naturally they had "a considerable influence on the next generation" of gentry, since in many instances they had been their teachers.

The reasonableness of many of the Puritans' demands, and the intolerent and prejudiced attitude of the Queen towards them, were undoubtedly the cause of that desire for liberty manifested by Strickland and Sir Peter Wentworth, who championed the cause of the Puritans and the rights of Parliament in the years 1571 and 1572. And these men were by no means the only champions of freedom in that Parliament. For when Strickland was suspended by the Queen, the Commons ordered his return to the House, and declared "that such an invasion of its rights by the Crown could not be submitted to without the guilt of betraying its trust and the liberties of the people: that the Queen could neither make nor break laws: and that the House which had the authority to determine the right to the Crown itself, was certainly competent to treat of all matters concerning the Church, its discipline and ceremonies".<sup>1</sup>

For liberty in religious thought and practice we have to look to another branch of Puritans. It would appear that it was among the Separatists - those whom we have called radical Puritans - that the true idea of liberty

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1: D'Ewes, "Journals", p. 176.

took shape, and was put into practice to a large extent.

Broadly speaking, what distinguished the Separatists from the Presbyterians was their insistence on the Equality of all the members of the Church, and their antipathy to all outside control, be it the State or Church or even Presbytery. This matter we have seen was the cause of the trouble in the second Frankfort Church, which issued in its being laid down that the final authority in the Church rested with the members, and not with the ministers and elders. In other words, they believed in a democratic church in which every member had the same freedom. Yet this freedom did not mean licence, since they were all under the control of Jesus Christ. Thus it was in reality a theocracy rather than a democracy. Ideally, this was the Church of freedom, but in practice it fell short of its ideal. It did not for instance grant to Anglicans the right to worship God according to their own conscience or inclinations. The Anglican Orders and Prayer-Book were as unscriptural and therefore as evil to the Separatists as they were to the Presbyterians. And the Separatists felt the Presbyterians were wrong too! This fact comes out clearly in the examination of Henry Barrow and John Greenwood, when before the High Commission in 1586 the indictment was that they maintained "That the worship of the English Church is flat idolatry: that we

(the Anglicans) admit into our Church persons unsanctified; that our preachers have no lawful calling: that our government is ungodly: that no bishop or preacher preacheth Christ sincerely and truly: that the people of every parish ought to choose their bishop, and that every elder, though he be no doctor or pastor, is a bishop: that all the precise which refuse the ceremonies of the church (i.e. the Anglican Church) and yet preach in the same church, strain at a gnat and swallow a camel and are close hypocrites and walk in a left-handed policy, as Master Cartwright....."1

As Dr James Mackinnon says, "Congregational autonomy was absolute, and on this autonomy the state might not encroach except in things temporal.....Priesthood was unscriptural, and with a church whose ministers were Priests, which was subject to unchristian laws and enforced legalised doctrines, they would have no communion.....On this point they were more exclusive and intolerant than their persecutors".2

On the other hand these Independents had got hold of a truth which neither the Anglicans nor the Presbyterians

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1: Paule's Whitgift (1612) p. 43, quoted by Prothero, "Statutes & Documents" p. 223.

2: Mackinnon, "History of Modern Liberty" (1906) Vol. II. p.342.

possessed at that time: the truth that in matters of religion the individual conscience should be free and unfettered, and that the final authority in spiritual things rests with the individual and not with any outside body, be it the State or Church.

It is true that the early Independents did not realise the universality of this truth or they would have granted in their minds the right of the Anglicans and the Presbyterians to worship according to their particular views and opinions, just as they claimed this right for themselves. The fact of the matter is that they didn't realise how big a truth they had got hold of. But some of their descendants were to make this discovery. Nevertheless as Dr. Mackinnon has said<sup>1</sup>, "They were in truth, in some respects, the most enlightened persons of their generation, notably in their protest against the persecution of conscience in any shape or form by the Civil or Ecclesiastical power". And the same writer goes on to say, "It is a truth which only posterity, alas, can as a rule clearly perceive, that progress and power are often in inverse proportion. Power might be enthroned at Westminster or Canterbury; progress was enthroned in some obscure Separatist meeting-house".

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1: "History of Modern Liberty", Vol.II. p.343.



We have briefly referred to the five Independent divines in the Westminster Assembly<sup>1</sup> whose opposition to the establishing of Presbyterianism, and whose petition to parliament, "was very apt to have kindled a fire". The cause of the trouble was their objection to the fettering of men's consciences in matters of religion. They championed the idea which had been developed by Henry Burton in 1641 in a tract entitled "The Protestation Protested". Burton's thesis was "Let not the Consciences of God's people be bound, where Christ hath purchased liberty".<sup>2</sup> Other works<sup>3</sup> of a similar character had appeared emphasizing the Independent position, notably by Lord Robert. Brook<sup>4</sup> and John Cotton<sup>5</sup>, a New England divine.

Burton in his work had pleaded that parliament in setting up a state-church should take care that "a due respect be had to those congregations and churches which desire an exemption", and it was for this that the Independent members of the Assembly were striving.

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- 1: Vide Supra p. 215 f.  
 2: "Protestation Protested" (1641) p.15 (the pages are not numbered)  
 3: Op. "Tracts on Liberty of Conscience" 1614-1661, Ed. E.B. Underhill.  
 4: "A Discourse opening the nature of that Episcopacy which is exercised in England".  
 5: "The Constitution of a particular visible church" (1642)  
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And though they were in numbers an insignificant minority<sup>1</sup> in zeal and power they even caused Baillie - the Scot's champion of Presbyterianism - to advise the Assembly "to eschew a publick rupture with the Independents till we (were) more able for them..... As yet a Presbyterie to this people is conceaved to be a strange monster".<sup>2</sup> This was in 1643, when the Independent Army was in the field, and perhaps this was a strong argument in favour of no rupture with the Independents in the Assembly, for Baillie writes: "we propose not to meddle in haste till it please God to advance our armie, which we expect will much advance our arguments".<sup>3</sup> But in the meantime the Independent members petitioned parliament with their "Apologetical Narration"<sup>4</sup>, and asked for toleration similar to that which had been extended to them in their exile in Holland. However, as we have seen, in January 1645 Presbyterianism was established by order of the House without any conscience clause being inserted.

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- 1: "Some ten or eleven" Baillie "Letters & Journals"  
Vol. II. p.110  
2: Baillie "Letters and Journals" Vol.II. p.117  
3: Ibid. Vol. II. p.111  
4: Vide Baillie, Ibid. Vol.II.  
pp. 129-131. 146-147.

The Independents however were neither satisfied nor silenced. From that time the struggle for freedom of conscience in religion found a strong advocate in Oliver Cromwell, the commander of the "Ironsides". This army was made up of men of almost every shade of dissenting opinion. Richard Baxter who for a time was a chaplain in Cromwell's Army gives a vivid account of its composition. "When I came to the army among Cromwell's soldiers", he writes, "I found a new face of things.....I heard the plotting Heads very hot upon that which intimated their Intention to subvert both Church and State. Independency and Anabaptistry were most prevalent: Antinomianism and Arminianism were equally distributed.....Abundance of the Common Troopers and many of the Officers, I found to be honest, sober, Orthodox Men, and others tractable ready to hear the Truth, and of upright Intentions: But a few proud, self-conceited, hot-headed Sectaries had got into the highest places.....and by their very heat and activity bore down the rest, or carried them along with them, and were the Soul of the Army.....They said, What were the Lords of England but William the Conquerour's Colonels? or the Barons but his Majors? or the knights but his Captains? They plainly shewed me that they thought God's Providence would cast the Trust of Religion and the Kingdom upon them

as Conquerours.....They were far from thinking of a moderate Episcopacy, or of any healing way between the Episcopal and the Presbyterians: They most honoured the Separatists, Anabaptists and Antinomians but Cromwell and his Council took on them to joyn themselves to no Party, but to be for the Liberty of all.....I found that many honest Men of weak judgments and little acquaintance with such Matters.....made it too much of their Religion to talk for this Opinion and for that; sometimes for State Democracy, and sometimes for Church Democracy.....But their most frequent and vehement Disputes were for Liberty of Conscience, as they called it; that is that the Civil Magistrate had nothing to do to determine of anything in Matters of Religion.....but every Man might not only hold, but preach and do in matters of religion what he pleased....."<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to compare with Baxter's account what Milton said of the same army. He was answering such men as Baxter who contended that "the Army is a Hydra-headed monster of accumulated heresies". But he goes on: "Those who speak the truth, acknowledge that our army excels all others, not only in courage, but in virtue and in piety. Other camps are the scenes of gambling, swearing

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1: Reliquiae Baxterianae I. pp. 50-53.

riot, and debauchery; in ours, the troops employ what leisure they have in searching the Scriptures and hearing the word; nor is there one who thinks it more honourable to vanquish the enemy than to propagate the truth; and they not only carry on a military warfare against their enemies, but an evangelical one against themselves.....We approve no heresies which are truly such; we do not even tolerate some; we wish them extirpated, but by those means which are best suited to the purpose - by reason and instruction, the only safe remedies for disorders of the mind; and not by the knife or the scourge, as if they were seated in the body".<sup>1</sup>

Comparing the two accounts one can readily see that the Ironsides, while deeply interested in religion, were by no means united in their beliefs. And therefore whatever might have been Cromwell's preferences, he was almost compelled to take a stand for liberty of conscience, if he meant to win the confidence and support of the advocates of these different shades of opinion in his army. And whether Cromwell believed on principle in liberty of Conscience, or whether this was thrust upon him by the exigencies of his position as the head of the army, he at any rate became a strong advocate of such liberty.

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1: "The Second Defence of the People of England" (Ed.Bohn)  
Vol.I. pp.274-275.

In his letter to Major General Crawford, dated March 10th 1643, he said, "the State, in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it, - that satisfies. I advised you formerly to bear with men of different mind from yourself: if you had done it when I advised you to it, I think you would not have had so many stumbling blocks in your way".<sup>1</sup> This letter was in reference to a dispute between Crawford and Lieutenant Colonel Packer, but it reveals Cromwell's attitude on liberty or toleration. And the same broad-mindedness is seen in Cromwell's letter to the Speaker, William Lenthall, in June 1645, after the great victory at Naseby. "Honest men" he writes, "served you faithfully in this action. Sir, they are trusty; I beseech you, in the name of God, not to discourage them. I wish this action may beget thankfulness and humility in all that are concerned in it. He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience, and you for the liberty he fights for".<sup>2</sup>

Cromwell's intentions for the church and religion come out in the "Hheads of the Proposals", submitted to Charles I in 1647 by Commissary General Ireton, Cromwell's

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1: "Cromwell's letters and Speeches", T. Carlyle, (Chelsea Edition) p. 148.

2: Carlyle, "Cromwell's Letters & Speeches", p.176.

son-in-law and confidant. The King was at this time a prisoner in the hands of the Presbyterian forces, and Parliament had submitted to him at Newcastle a number of propositions which, if the king could have accepted, might have restored him to his throne. On matters of religion Parliament proposed that the King should sign the "Covenant"; that an Act should be passed making this obligatory on all subjects in the three kingdoms; that Episcopacy be made illegal, and that Presbyterianism, as then established, be confirmed.<sup>1</sup> On June 4th 1647, however, the Independent forces kidnapped Charles and led him from Holmby House in Northamptonshire to Newmarket, and on August 1st the "Heads of the Proposals"<sup>2</sup> were submitted to him at Hampton Court. Proposals XI, XII and XIII are worth recording here as they reveal the tolerant attitude in religion of the framers of these clauses. Clause XI proposed that, "An Act to be passed to take away all coercive power, authority, and jurisdiction of Bishops and all other Ecclesiastical Officers whatsoever, extending to any Civil penalties upon any: and to repeal all laws whereby the civil magistrate hath been, or is bound, upon any ecclesiastical censure to proceed (ex officio) unto any civil penalties against any persons so censured".

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1: Rushworth, "Historical Collections", Vol. VI. 309 f  
 2: Ibid. VII. p. 731 f

Clause XII "That there be a repeal of all Acts or clauses in any Act enjoining the use of the Book of Common Prayer, and imposing any penalties for neglect thereof; as also of all Acts or clauses of any Act imposing any penalty for not coming to church, or for meetings elsewhere for prayer or other religious duties, exercises or ordinances, and some other provision to be made for discovering of Papists.....and for disabling of them....."

Clause XIII. "That the taking of the Covenant be not enforced upon any, nor any penalties imposed on the refusers, whereby men might be restrained to take it against their judgments or consciences; but all Order and Ordinances tending to that purpose to be repealed".

Surely there is much in these clauses which reveals that liberty, as conceived of by Cromwell and the Independents, was well on the way to becoming the genuine thing - freedom of conscience. It had not quite arrived there yet. For while freedom of conscience in religion was claimed for Protestants, it was to be withheld from Papists. And this is the greatest height to which Cromwell and his party attained.

When he came into complete control of affairs in April, 1653, by driving the Rump from the House, his action on that occasion would appear to be a contradiction of his



belief in liberty. Nothing more autocratic than this had been done by Charles or James. No doubt he was moved with something of the righteous indignation of the Hebrew prophets because of the futility of the members. "You are no Parliament", he said, "some of you are drunkards, some of you are living in contempt of God's Commandments.....corrupt unjust persons; scandalous to the profession of the Gospel.....In the name of God - go!" And he cried, "It's you that have forced me to this. I have sought the Lord night and day, that he would rather slay me than put me upon the doing of this work".<sup>1</sup> We believe it was a supreme act of heroism undertaken by the loftiest of motives - even the desire for freedom, yet the action itself was a denial of freedom.

His motive is revealed in his speech to the "Little Parliament"<sup>2</sup> which succeeded the "Rump" in July 1653, and which was composed of men nominated by the Council of State set up by Cromwell. They were "known persons of approved integrity, men fearing God".<sup>3</sup> In his speech, Cromwell said, "The government of the nation being in such

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- 1: "Cromwell's Letters & Speeches" (Chelsea Ed). Part VII p.330.
- 2: Vide, Whitelocke, "Memorials" (Ed. 1732) pp 557 f
- 3: Cromwell's Letters & Speeches" Pt. VII. p. 335 -  
The advice of the Independent Churches had been taken. Vide Forster, "Eminent British Statesmen" VII.: pp. 138-140.

a condition as we saw, and things being under so much ill sense abroad, and likely to end in confusion, if we so proceeded, we desired that they would devolve the trust over to some well-affected men, such as had an interest in the nation, and were known to be of good affection to the Commonwealth".<sup>1</sup> And he goes on. "Truly God hath called you to this work by, I think, as wonderful providence as ever passed upon the sons of men in so short a time..... I confess I never looked to see such a day as this - it may be nor you neither - when Jesus Christ should be so owned as He is, this day, in this Work. Jesus Christ is owned this day by the Call of You: and you own Him, by your willingness to appear for Him. And you manifest this, as far as poor creatures may do, to be a Day of the Power of Christ".<sup>2</sup>

And his purpose for religion comes out in the words: "I think I need not advise, much less press you, to endeavour the Promoting of the Gospel: to encourage the Ministry; such a Ministry and such Ministers as be faithful in the Land; upon whom the true character is. Men that have received the Spirit, which Christians will be able to discover, and do 'the will of';.....I speak not.....for a

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1: Ibid, pp. 346-347.

2: Ibid, pp. 349-353.

Ministry deriving itself from the Papacy, and pretending to that which is so much insisted on, "Succession".

The true Succession is through the Spirit....."<sup>1</sup>

In re-organizing the Church, Parliament, which was composed largely of 'Independents', wanted both Dis-establishment and Disendowment. A resolution of the House on July 15th provided that after November 3rd, ministers should no longer be supported in the old way; and a committee was appointed to go into the matter.<sup>2</sup> Before the committee's report was ready, however, a further resolution<sup>3</sup> proposed the abolition of patronage altogether.

Cromwell did not looj favourably on these proposals. But strangely enough when the Committee's report was presented on December 2nd, 1653, it pronounced against the resolution of the House and in favour of tithes.<sup>4</sup> It further recommended "that Ministers of an incompetent, simoniacal, loose or otherwise scandalous nature, plainly unfit to preach any Gospel to immortal creatures, should have a Travelling Commission of chosen Puritan Persons appointed, to travel into all Counties and straightway inspect them and eject them, and clear Christ's Church of

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- 1: "Cromwell's Letters & Speeches", p.353.
  - 2: Whitelocke, "Memorials", p. 560.
  - 3: Ibid. p. 560.
  - 4: Ibid, p.570

them".<sup>1</sup> Parliament, however, feeling it had been "let down" by the Committee on the main issue, after ten days' debating, resigned its power into Cromwell's hands.<sup>2</sup>

Using the power conferred on him by the "Instrument of Government" drawn up by the Council of State<sup>3</sup>, the Protector set about the settlement of religion. State support was continued, but the Church was to be neither Presbyterian nor Independent. The ultimate question of the Church's constitution and discipline was quietly shelved. In each town and village the Church was merely a congregation of religiously minded men and women. The opinions of its pastor might give it a semblance of Independency or Presbyterianism, or some other "ism". But these differences were to be tolerated in the New Establishment. The only thing Cromwell insisted on was that the ministers should be worthy and able. To guarantee this, two Committees were set up: a Committee of "Triers" whose business it was to test the fitness of candidates for the ministerial office<sup>4</sup>; and a Committee for "Ejecting

1: Ibid, pp. 590-606.

2: Ibid. p.576

3: Ibid. p.571-577, Clauses 35-37 of Instrument of Government. Gardiner "History of the Commonwealth", p. 288

4: Scobell, "Acts and Ordnances", (Edition 1658) Part II. p.p. 279-280.

scandalous and inefficient ministers".<sup>1</sup> The former Committee was composed of Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist ministers, with a sprinkling of laymen.<sup>2</sup> The Committee met in London, though ministers who could not come to town, might be examined locally. The Committee was in reality a Commission, with branches in every county, which constituted a Court of Complaint, before which either a minister or schoolmaster might be arraigned by the parishoners. Parish Churches, therefore, remained Parish Churches, but with this difference, that the incumbent might be a Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist or even an Episcopalian.

Cromwell was not averse to Episcopacy in itself, but to the evils that were accidental to it. Bishop Kennett maintained that "the prejudice Cromwell had against the Episcopal party was more for their being Royalists than for being of the good old Church".<sup>3</sup> And it is quite probable that the "occasional Episcopalian" was not so rare in the Cromwellian pulpit as we may imagine. Walker<sup>4</sup>

1: Scobell, Ibid. p.p 335-347.

2: Vide Scobell as cited for the list. It included Stephen Marshall, a leading Presbyterian; Thomas Goodwin, John Owen, and Sidrach Simpson, Independents; and Toombes, Jessey and Daniel Dyke, Baptists.

3: Stoughton, "History of Religion in England" (1881) Vol. II. p.321, note.

4: Walker, "Sufferings of the Clergy", Part I. pp.198-204.

reckons the number of ejected clergy as round about ten thousand. But another authority gives the number as under two thousand.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee of "Triers" has been likened to the High Commission Court of Laudian times.<sup>2</sup> Walker represents them as putting confusing and unnecessary questions to certain candidates with the sole object of turning them down.<sup>3</sup> And even Hanbury, who would make out a good case for them, has to admit that "eventually clamour and prejudice rose high and strong against them; persevering malice and revenge distorted or perverted, and also perpetuated, their actions and mistakes".<sup>4</sup> If this is true, it is well to remember the temptation put into the hands of nonconformists, when confronted by representatives of a Church which had shewn neither sympathy with, nor tolerance of, nonconformist opinions, when that Church, the Episcopal, was in power. But revenge is not freedom.

Cromwell's toleration, however, did not extend so far as to include "liberty of conscience" for all. The Fifth-Monarchy men, for instance, were excluded. During the Protectorate this party became particularly active.

- 1: Neal, "Puritans" (1822) Vol.III. pp.111-113.
- 2: Ivimey, "History of the Baptists", Vol.I. pp.230-231.
- 3: Walker, Ibid. Pt.I. pp. 171 f
- 4: Hanbury, "Historical Memorials relating to the Independents", Vol.III. pp. 429-430.

Feake and Vavasour Powell spoke openly against Cromwell, declaring that one evil system had been removed only to give place to another which equally denied the sovereignty of Christ.<sup>1</sup> John Canne also published several books in which the Protector was unmistakably pointed at, as the "little horn", and the "number of the beast".<sup>2</sup> Cromwell undoubtedly had the "Fifth Monarchy" men, as well as the "Levellers", in mind when, in his speech to the Parliament of 1654, he said, "Such considerations and pretensions to "liberty of conscience", what are they leading us towards! Liberty of conscience and liberty of the subject - two as glorious things to be contended for, as any that God hath given us; yet both these abused for the patronising of villanies".<sup>3</sup> And, of course, liberty was not granted to Papists.

But that is about as far as the Protector's "limitation to liberty" went. In the newly established Church there was no "confession of faith" to be signed by

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- 1: Stoughton, "History of Religion in England", (Edition 1881) Vol. II. pp.62-68.
- 2: Hanbury, "Historical Memorials". Vol. III. p. 477
- 3: Carlyle, "Cromwell's Letters and Speeches", (Chelsea Ed). Part VIII. p. 23, and vide pp. 25 f.

the ministry. The first Protectorate Parliament had appointed a Committee of Ministers to discuss the question of fundamentals<sup>1</sup>, but it came to nothing. Also, in 1657, the "Humble Petition and Advice" presented by Parliament asked among other things for the drawing up of a Confession of Faith<sup>2</sup>. But the Confession was never drawn up.

Cromwell seems to have been animated with a desire to unify the conflicting protestant opinions of his age by applying character tests rather than faith tests. Presbyterians, Baptists, Independents, and even Episcopalians (so long as the latter were not Royalists and working against the Commonwealth) were admitted into the Established Church, if qualified for the position according to the test of the Triers.

In the "Agreement of the People" submitted to the Rump Parliament in January 1649 by the Council of Officers, a large liberty in religion was recommended. This was perhaps but natural since in Cromwell's army there had been men of almost all shades of religious opinion except papists and Anglicans. Article nine of the 'Agreement' requested that religion "be reformed to the greatest purity

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1: Vide Neal, "History of Puritans" (Edition 1822)  
Vol. IV. pp. 89-91.

: Reliquiae Baxterianae, Vol. I. pp. 198-99

2: Scobell, "Acts & Ordinances" Part II. p. 381.



in doctrine, worship and discipline, according to the Word of God; the instructing the people thereunto in a public way, so it be not compulsive; as also the maintaining of able teachers for that end, and for the confutation or discovery of heresy, error, and whatsoever is contrary to sound doctrine, is allowed to be provided for by our Representatives; the maintenance of which teachers may be out of a public treasury, and....not by tithes: provided, that Popery or Prelacy be not held forth as the public way or profession in the nation. That to the public profession.....none be compelled by penalties or otherwise;.....That such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ, however differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship or discipline publicly held forth..... shall not be restrained....but protected.....according to their Conscience.....That all laws, ordinances, statutes.... contrary of the liberty herein provided.....be repealed and made void".<sup>1</sup>

The same demands were also put forward in the "Instrument of Government" on December 16th, 1653, in Clauses XXXV-XXXVIII<sup>2</sup>. But earlier than this, September 27th, 1650, the Rump or Independent Parliament had

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1: Vide Gardiner, "Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution" pp. 369-370.  
 2: Vide, Ibid, p. 416.

repealed<sup>1</sup> all the old Acts of Elizabeth which made want of uniformity in religion punishable. They retained however the Act of 1625 on Sabbath observance, and all the moral legislation of the Long Parliament.<sup>2</sup> Freedom in the mode of worship was the end aimed at, but freedom in conduct - morals - was denied. The arbitrary moral ideals of the Puritans, largely inspired by the Old Testament, were enforced by laws and penalties.

Cromwell's idea of liberty of conscience, a phrase so often used by him, seems to have been to a large extent liberty for those who thought more or less as he did. While in matters of religion he was more tolerant of other people's conscientious beliefs than had been the Anglicans or Presbyterians, nevertheless there were limits to the freedom he allowed. And the weakness of his position as a champion of liberty in religion is seen in that he, like the autocrats before him, took it upon himself to define what freedom of conscience involved. What was desirable for him was surely, he seemed to argue, good for all! This can be gathered from his third speech to parliament on September 12th, 1654. "Liberty of Conscience is a natural right"; he said, "and he that would have it,

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1: **Vide** Ibid.: pp.: 391-394. Scobell Part II. p.138.  
 2: "Vide Supra. pp. 179-181.

ought to give it....." But he qualified this laudable statement in his own case by the bold assertion that, "having 'himself' liberty to settle what he likes for the Public". And his excuse for, or justification of, this claim was that "Every sect saith: 'oh, give me liberty!' But give it him, and to his power he will not yield it to anybody else".<sup>1</sup> Thus the Protector presumed to dole out "Liberty", and in so doing he limited it for many and denied it to some!!

John Milton, the Latin secretary of State during the Protectorate, had in many ways a clearer understanding of Liberty than Cromwell. He would liberate the church from state control on the ground that man is naturally the final judge in matters of religion. "It cannot be denied", he writes, "that we.....having no other divine rule or authority from without.....but the holy scripture, and no other within us but the illumination of the Holy Spirit, so interpreting that scripture as warrantable to ourselves.....can have no other ground in matters of religion but.....the scriptures". And he concludes, "it follows clearly, that no man or body of men.....can be the infallible judges or determiners in matters of religion to any other men's consciences but their own".<sup>2</sup> Later he says:

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1: "Letters & Speeches", Part VIII. p. 54

2: "A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes", Milton's Prose Works (Ed. Bohn) Vol. II. p.523.

".....to compel outward profession.....though inward religion cannot (be compelled) is to compel hypocrisy, not to advance religion....."<sup>1</sup> In another place he pleads for toleration of Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Socinians and Arminians, and he writes: "It cannot be denied, thatvthe Authors or late reviversof all these sects.....were learned, worthy, zealous and religious men.....perfect and powerful in the Scriptures, holy and unblamable in their lives: and it cannot be imagined that God would desert such painful and zealous labourers in his church.....to damnable errors and a reprobate sense, who had so often implored the assistance of his Spirit; but rather, having made no man infallible, that he hath pardoned their errors, and accepts their pious endeavours..... What protestant then.....would persecute, and not rather charitably tolerate, such men as these, unless he mean to abjure the principles of his own religion? If it be asked, how far should they be tolerated; I answer, doubtless equally, as being all protestants; that is, on all occasions to give account of their faith, either by arguing, preaching in their several assemblies, public writing, and the freedom of printing".<sup>2</sup> And Milton's idea of liberty in religion is based on the lofty ground of Christian

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1: Ibid, p. 534

2: "Of True Religion", Milton's Prose Works (Bohn)  
Vol. II. p. 512.

morality. "O, citizens", he writes, ".....unless that liberty.....is of such a kind as arms can neither procure nor take away, which alone is the fruit of piety, of justice, of temperance, and unadulterated virtue, (which) shall have taken deep root in your minds and hearts, there will not long be wanting one who will snatch from you by treachery what you have acquired by arms.....unless by the means of piety, not frothy and loquacious, but operative, unadulterated and sincere, you clear the horizon of the mind from those mists of superstition which arise from ignorance of true religion, you will always have those who will bend your necks to the yoke as if you were brutes,..... unless you will subjugate the propensity to avarice, to ambition, and sensuality, and expel all luxury from yourselves and from your families, you will find that you have cherished a more stubborn and intractable despot at home, than you ever encountered in the field;.....Let these be the first enemies whom you subdue.....Unless you are victors in this service, it is in vain that you have been victorious over the despotic enemy in the field....."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless Milton could not tolerate Prelacy and what he called "Prelatical Episcopacy". His reasons were that both Romanists and High Anglicans sought, as the Puritans always  
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 contended, to uphold

1: "The Second Defence of the People", Ibid. Vol.I. p. 295.

a system of government, and to fetter men's consciences with practises and beliefs for which there was no warrant in Scripture. He writes, "For the property of truth is, where she is publicly taught, to unyoke and set free the minds and spirits of a nation first from the thralldom of sin and superstition, after which all honest and legal freedom of civil life cannot be long absent; but prelaty, whom the tyrant custom beget, a natural tyrant in religion, and in state the agent and minister of tyranny, seems to have had this fatal gift in her nativity.....that whatsoever she should touch or come near either in ecclesial or political government, it should turn, not to gold,.....but to the dress and scum of slavery.....The Service of God, who is truth, her liturgy confesses to be perfect freedom; but her works and her opinions declare that the service of prelaty is perfect slavery, and by consequence perfect falsehood".<sup>1</sup>

There is no need to enter into detail upon the disappointing religious history of the period between the Protector's death and the Restoration. The Cromwellian Church of wide tolerance for tender consciences was succeeded by a second experiment in Presbyterian intolerance. The Rump Parliament was recalled<sup>2</sup>. Presbyterianism was

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- 1: "The Reason of Church Government", Milton's Prose Works, (Bohn) Vol. II. pp. 503-504.
- 2: Whitelock "Memorials of the English Affairs" (1732) pp. 677-678 Declaration by officers of the Army.

re-established, and Independents were removed from prominent positions. This was in February, 1660. By April the same year a new Parliament assembled that was Royalist in sympathy; Charles II was invited to the Throne, and he entered London on the 29th of May 1660.<sup>1</sup>

The new King in the "Declaration of Breda" said, "We do declare a liberty to tender consciences; and that no man shall be disquieted, or called in question, for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom; and that we shall be ready to consent to such an act of Parliament, as, upon mature deliberation, shall be offered to us, for the full granting that indulgence".<sup>2</sup>

However sincere the new King may have been when he signed the Declaration, Episcopacy soon became the established form of religion, and neither Presbyterianism nor Independency found a place in the new scheme of Church government.

The Savoy Conference<sup>3</sup>, April 15th, 1661, revealed the fact that Episcopacy was in power. The Bishops shewed no intention of making concessions to the tender consciences of Nonconformists. Sheldon, Bishop of London, said, "It is not we that have sought this conference and desire alterations in

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1: Whitelocke, pp.760-701.

2: "Documents relating to the settlement of the Church of England". (Ed. G. Gould, 1862) p. 3.

3: Vide Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae. Part II. pp. 305-372.

the Liturgy, and, therefore, we have nothing to say or do till you bring in all that you have to say against it in writing and all the additional forms and alterations which you desire".<sup>1</sup> Baxter himself drew up and submitted forms of service for the Lord's Day, the Lord's Supper, Baptism, etc.<sup>2</sup> But the Bishops obstructed all reform.

The new Parliament restored the Bishops to the Upper House<sup>3</sup> after burning the "Solemn League of Covenant"<sup>4</sup>. The Corporation Act<sup>5</sup> was passed, requiring municipal officers, from the Mayor downwards, to take the oath of supremacy, repudiate the Covenant, and swear not to take up arms against the King under any conditions. And the taking up of any office under a Corporation was made impossible, unless the person had received communion after the rite of the Church of England during the last twelve months.

The climax was reached, however, by the passing of the "Act of Uniformity"<sup>6</sup> which came into force on Bartholomew's Day, Sunday, August 24th, 1662. It required every incumbent

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- 1: Baxter, Ibid. Part II. p. 305.
- 2: Baxter, Ibid. Part II. pp. 308-333 Baxter's Exceptions to the Liturgy.
- 3: W. Kennett, "A Register and Chronicle Ecclesiastical and Civil", (1729) p. 509. 12 Car. II. Cap. 17.
- 4: Kennett. Ibid. p. 450.
- 5: Kennett, Ibid. p. 583. 13 Car. II. Statute 2. Cap. 1 (Statutes at Large Vol. V. pp. 73-76)
- 6: Swainson, "Parliamentary History of the Act of Uniformity". 13 Car. II. Cap. 4. (Statutes at Large, Vol. V. pp. 95-107).



to declare publicly his "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained in, and prescribed by, the Book of Common-Prayer". If not episcopally ordained, ministers were to be re-ordained at the hands of a Bishop. And they must take the oath of canonical obedience, and swear subjection to their Ordinary, according to the canons of the Church. They must also adjure the solemn League and Covenant.

"Conventicles" or meetings for worship among those who could not conform, began to spring up under the leadership of both Presbyterian and Independent ministers.<sup>1</sup> Though they needed no encouragement in this it would seem as if the King had encouraged them. "He advised them to meet wisely, and not in too great numbers, for the present, till they see what Parliament might be wrought to do".<sup>2</sup> Parliament's answer however, was the "Conventicle Act" of May 1664, to the effect that persons of sixteen years old and upwards must not attend religious services held "in other manner than is allowed by the Liturgy", in greater numbers than four. The penalties being £5 or three months' imprisonment for the first offence; £10 or six months for the second, and £100 or transportation for seven years for the third<sup>3</sup>.

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- 1: Vide Drysdale, "History of Presbyterianism", pp. 395 f and Waddington, "Congregational History", pp. 577-580.  
 2: Vide Letters of Hooke to Goffe, given in Waddington, Ibid, pp. 579 f.  
 3: Gould, "Documents Relating to the Settlement", pp. 477-488 16 Carl. II. Cap. 4

This was followed in October, 1655, by the "Act for restraining Nonconformists from inhabiting Corporations"<sup>1</sup>, better known as the "Five Mile Act". It made it a punishable offence, incurring a fine of £40, for any minister who had not sworn obedience to the Act of Uniformity, to come within five miles of a corporate town, or any town wherein he had lectured or conducted Nonconformist services.

In 1668, Sir Mathew Hale made an attempt at comprehension<sup>2</sup>, which suggested that Nonconformists might build their own churches and worship in their own way, if registered. But the House would have none of this. The Second Conventicle Act of 1670 was its answer, making the law more stringent, in that magistrates were to be fined if they neglected their duty in putting down conventicles.<sup>3</sup>

On March 15th, 1672, the King issued his "Declaration of Indulgence"<sup>4</sup>. A certain number of places were to be allowed "for the use of such as do not conform to the Church of England, to meet and assemble in order to their public worship and devotion". The concessions to Nonconformists

- 1: Ibid. pp. 488-491. 17 Car1. II. Cap. 2.  
(Statutes at Large, Vol. V. pp. 252-253)
- 2: Vide Stoughton, "History of Religion in England",  
Vol. III. pp. 372-373.
- 3: Gould. Ibid, pp. 491-499. 22 Car1, II. Cap. I.  
(Statutes at Large, Vol. V. pp. 308-314)
- 4: Vide Neal. "History of the Puritans" (1822) Vol. IV.  
pp. 407-409.

however, were not enjoyed for long. When Parliament met in 1673, the "Declaration" was cancelled and the "Test Act"<sup>1</sup> put in its place. It is entitled "An Act for preventing Dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants". It required that any person holding civil or military office under the Crown must take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, must receive the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the English Church, and unequivocally declare that transubstantiation is false.

It is true that the Act was aimed against Romanists, whom the King favoured: and it is true that the Commons introduced a "Relief Bill"<sup>2</sup>, which sought to extend the benefits of the "Indulgence".

In the brief reign of James II the struggle continued. Animated with his brother's desire to favour Catholics, he also put forward a "Declaration of Indulgence" on April 4th 1687.<sup>3</sup> Twelve months later he re-issued the "Declaration", with the command that it should be read from all pulpits of the Established Church on May 20th and 27th.<sup>4</sup> Seven Bishops refused to read the Declaration and were imprisoned.<sup>5</sup>

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1: Gould, Ibid, pp.499-507. 25 Carl.II. Cap. 2 (Statutes at Large, Vol.V. pp.415-420)

2: Cobbett "Parliamentary History" (1808) Vol.IV. pp.571-575.

3: Vide Wilkin's "Concilia", Vol.IV. pp.614-615.

4: Vide Wilkin's, Ibid. p.616

5: Vide Wilkin's, Ibid. p.617.

The seven were Sancroft (Canterbury), White (Peterborough), Turner (Ely), Lloyd (St.Asaph), Lake (Chichester) Ken (Bath and Wells), Trelawny (Exeter)

And the Nonconformists, though they were to benefit by the Indulgence, had little liking for it, because of the King's Romanist intentions. Some of them wrote to the Bishops urging them to stand fast;<sup>1</sup> and some visited the imprisoned seven to congratulate them and express their good wishes.<sup>2</sup>

The interest displayed by the Nonconformists in the cause of Protestantism which was being upheld by the Bishops against the King, was not without its good effects on the attitude of some of the clergy towards Dissenters. And a <sup>3</sup> Bill was introduced into the House of Lords on the 11th of March 1689, which aimed at something more than toleration. The Toleration Bill had been introduced on February 28th, and the toleration of Dissenters became the law of the land on May 24th.<sup>4</sup> But the Bill of March 11th sought the comprehension within the Anglican Church of all the divided Protestants. A Royal Commission was even appointed to draw

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1: Mackintosh, "History of the Revolution", p. 246.

2: Reresby, "Memoirs", (Edition Cartwright), p.396.

3: Burnet, "History of my own Time" (Edition 1823.)  
Vol. IV. pp. 15-21.

4: 1. Guil. & Mar. 1 Cap. 18. (Statutes at Large Vol.V.  
pp. 513-519)

Gould, Documents relating to the Settlement",  
pp. 507-515.

up plans for alterations in the Prayer-Book which might make it acceptable to Nonconformists.<sup>1</sup> And for a time it looked as if some of the outstanding causes of dissent were to be removed and the divided Protestants re-united. Baxter expressed himself as willing to accept Episcopal government, and affirmed that "most of the godly able Nonconformist ministers, falsely called Presbyterians, of my acquaintance..... are most Episcopal Nonconformists, and would choose none but healing terms".<sup>2</sup> And Calamy declared that if the Comprehension Bill had been accepted, two-thirds of the Nonconformists would have gone back to the Established Church.<sup>3</sup>

This was not to be however. When Convocation met not a little hostility to the measure was manifested<sup>4</sup>, and dissenters had to be content with toleration to worship according to their own conscience. This toleration was not however granted to Romanists. And the position in 1689 was similar in many respects to the position advocated and adopted by Cromwell, except that Episcopacy was reinstated as the National Church and all other sects were merely tolerated. Nevertheless a

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- 1: Stoughton, "History of Religion in England", (1881)  
Vol. V. pp. 98-106.  
2: Baxter, "National Churches", p.68.  
3: Calamy, "Abridgement of Baxter's Life", Vol. I. p: 448.  
4: Lathbury, "History of Convocation". (2nd Ed).  
pp. 325, f.

large measure of freedom in religion had been won, and for this the Nation was indebted to the Puritans, and especially to the Independent branches, Baptists and Congregationalists.

## PART II. Political Liberty.

Political liberty, by which is here meant the rights of the House of Commons as a representative assembly to legislate in the interests of the nation, was virtually secured by the "Declaration of Rights", in the same year that toleration was granted in religion. The movement towards political liberty was carried on concurrently with the religious movement, and derived not a little of its driving power from the men in the House who had come under the influence of Puritanism. As a matter of fact it was the autocracy of Elizabeth in the religious sphere that first rouses the Commons to opposition against her will; and it would seem that, opposition once being aroused, on this matter, it easily became the custom to criticise and oppose whatever seemed arbitrary and beyond the rights of the royal prerogative.

Elizabeth was quite as autocratic as James I or Charles I but common-sense and circumstances enabled her to exercise her royal will with greater freedom. She never for instance spoke of her Divine right as the Stuarts did, but endeavoured

to make the people feel that whatever she did was for the good of the nation. And there is no doubt that her one enthusiasm was for the safety of her throne and the united affection of her people. As she said in her first speech before parliament, "Nothing, no worldly thing under the sun - is so dear as the love and goodwill of her subjects".<sup>1</sup> Circumstances also, such as the fear of Romanist reaction, and the threat to the safety of the realm from Spain and Mary Stuart and France, enabled her to keep a tight hold on religion, and to govern through the Council, with a large measure of consent if not with full approbation.

We have seen however the growing sympathy of the Commons with the Puritan movement<sup>2</sup>, and their attempts to legislate on the lines of a compromise with Anglicanism. And we have noticed the demands made by men like Strickland and Wentworth for freedom in the House to discuss matters of religion without being molested by the Queen. But these men were by no means alone in taking up such an attitude. On April 20th 1571, after Strickland had been turned out of the Commons, Mr Carlton, referring to his absence, said, "that neither in regard of the country, which was not to be wronged, nor for the liberty

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1: Speech read by Sir Nicholas Bacon, January 1559, vide Froude, "Hist. of England" (1866) Vol.VII. pp.46-47.

2: Vide Supra, pp.

of the House, which was not to be infringed, we should permit him to be detained from us. But, whatsoever the intendment of this offence might be, that he should be sent for to the Bar of that House, there to be heard, and there to answer". The Treasurer on that occasion tried to smooth things down by saying that Strickland "was in no sort stayed for any word or speech by him in that place offered; but for the exhibiting of a Bill into the House against the Prerogative of the Queen; which was not to be tolerated.....". Another member, however, Mr Yelverton, demanded that Strickland should be sent for. "First, he said, the President was perillous, and though in this happy time of lenity, among so good and honourable Personages, under so gracious a Prince, nothing of extremity or injury was to be feared; yet the times might be altered, and what now is permitted, hereafter might be construed as of Duty, and enforced, even on this ground of the present permission. He further said, that all matters not Treason, or too much to the Derogation of the Imperial Crown, were tolerable there, where all things came to be considered of, and where there was such fullness of Power, as even the right of the Crown was to be determined, and by Warrant whereof we had so resolved. That to say the Parliament had no Power to determine the Crown, was High-Treason.....it was fit for Princes to have their Prerogatives; yet the same to



be straitned within reasonable limits. The Prince.....  
could not of herself make Laws, neither might she by the  
same reason break Laws....."<sup>1</sup>

Here then was the spirit that would curtail the powers  
of the monarch and enhance the powers of the Commons. Not  
all the members of the House, however, were in sympathy with  
this purpose. On February 8th 1575, Peter Wentworth Esqr.  
made a speech on 'Liberty' provoked by the interference of the  
queen. "Sweet is the name of Liberty", he said, ".....it  
behoveth us to take care lest we contenting ourselves with the  
sweetness of the name, lose and forgo the thing, being of the  
greatest value that can come into this noble Realm. The in-  
estimable treasure is the use of it in this House".<sup>2</sup>  
And he went on to shew how this liberty was infringed, con-  
tending "that in this House which is termed a place of free  
speech, there is nothing so necessary for the preservation of  
the Prince and State as free speech; and without it it is a  
scorn and mockery to call it a Parliament House, for in truth  
it is none, but a very school of Flattery and Dissimulation..."<sup>3</sup>  
There were two impediments however; "Two things", he said,  
"do great hurt in this place.....the one is a rumour which  
runneth about the House and this it is, take heed what you do,

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1: D'Ewes. "Journals", pp.175-176.

2: Ibid. p. 236.

3: Ibid. p. 237.

the Queen's majesty liketh not such a matter..... The other: sometimes a message is brought in.....Commanding or Inhibiting, very injurious to the freedom of speech or consultation. I would to God.....these two were Buried in Hell, I mean rumours and messages....." And he concluded "it is a dangerous thing in a Prince to oppose or bend her self against her Nobility and People,.....and how could any Prince more unkindly intreat, abuse, oppose her self against her Nobility and People, than Her Majesty did in the last Parliament".<sup>1</sup>

For his effort on behalf of liberty to speak one's mind in the House, Wentworth was ordered by the House to be committed to the Serjeant's-Ward as a prisoner to await examination by the Privy Council.<sup>2</sup> After the Examination<sup>3</sup> he was committed to the Tower, but was set at liberty on March 12th, the same year. On the same day Sir Walter Mildmay made a speech in the Commons in which he praised the Queen for her clemency in restoring and pardoning Wentworth, but he emphasised Wentworth's contention, saying, "true it is, that nothing can be well concluded in a Counsel where there is not allowed in debating of Causes brought in deliberation, Liberty and Freedom of Speech".<sup>4</sup>

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- 1: D'Ewes, "Journals", p. 239.  
 2: Ibid. p. 241.  
 3: Ibid. pp. 241-244.  
 4: Ibid. p. 259.

Freedom to speak one's mind on all subjects, and liberty to criticise Bills, and to suggest to the Queen things necessary for legislation, were the chief contentions of the Elizabethan parliaments. And it was chiefly her Majesty's autocratic attitude in matters of religion that provoked the members who claimed this freedom. And these members were, if not themselves Puritans, largely in sympathy with them and their programme.

But once this attitude of opposition to the Queen's autocracy had been taken up, it emboldened such members to maintain this attitude towards other abuses than those in religion. In 1597 the question of Monopolies was raised in the House and during the session this matter, which tended to be shelved, was urged again and again.<sup>1</sup> It came up again in Elizabeth's last parliament in 1601. Francis Bacon and his cousin Sir Robert Cecil defended the Queen's practice. Bacon in his speech described the monopolies; "If any man" he said, "out of his own Wit, industry or indeavour finds out anything beneficial for the Common Wealth, or brings in any new Invention which every subject.....may use; yet in regard of his pain and travel therein, her Majesty perhaps is pleased to grant him a Priviledge to use the same only by himself or his

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1: D'Ewes. "Journals", pp. 554-570.

Deputies for a certain time.....Sometimes there is a glut of things.....as perhaps corn, and her Majesty gives Licence of transportation to one man.....Sometimes there is a scarcity.....and the like is granted also....These have been in Tryal both at the Common Pleas.....where if the Judges do find the Priviledge good and beneficial to the Common Wealth, they then will allow it; otherwise disallow it....."<sup>1</sup>

Bacon's contentions were scarcely true as the Queen granted monopolies not only to those of "Wit, industry and indeavour", but largely to Court favourites, as Essex and Raleigh.

A long debate ensued, in which Lawrence Hide, Francis Moore and Raleigh took part, and on November 25th, the Speaker, Cecil, intimated the Queen's intention to revoke most of the monopolies and suspend the rest. Cecil's speech is noteworthy in one particular. He said, "I have heard myself, being in my coach, these words spoken aloud, God prosper those that further the overthrow of these Monopolies - God send the Prerogative touch not our Liberty " The man in the street on the side of parliament and liberty and against Autocracy! And Cecil realised this. For he proceeds ".....the time was never more apt to disorder, and make ill interpretation of good meanings. I think those persons would

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1: D'Ewes, "Journals". p. 644.

be glad that all Sovereignty were converted into Popularity: We being here are but the Popular branch and our liberty, the liberty of the subject. And the world is apt to slander most especially the Ministers of Government".<sup>1</sup>

Such then was the temper of the Commons when James I assumed the reins of government. Public right rather than royal privilege was the growing idea in the House. Unfortunately James was neither as tactful as Elizabeth had been, nor as gracious in manner. His impatient and insolent attitude towards the Puritans at the Hampton Court Conference, when he said that a presbytery "agreeth as well with monarchy as God with the devil", etc.<sup>2</sup> was typical of his arrogant bearing to parliament. In his first speech from the throne at the opening of parliament on March 19th, 1604, James manifested his consciousness of the divine approval of himself, which was to prove so fatal to himself and his son, in the words - "the blessings which God hath, in my person, bestowed upon you all" -. And though he was merely following the policy which Elizabeth had pursued, he must have roused the indignation of papists and puritans by his tactless declaration, "although I found but one religion.....publicly allowed and by the law maintained, yet found I another sort of religion, besides a private sect, lurking within the bowels of the nation.

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1: D'Ewes. "Journals", p. 653.

2: Vide, Barlow "Hampton Court Conference" (1604) p.102.

The first is the true religion.....;the second is the falsely called Catholics, but truly Papists: the third, which I call a sect rather than a religion, is the Puritans and Novelists.....being ever discontented with the present government (i.e. in the Church) and impatient to suffer any superiority which maketh this sect unable to be suffered in any well-governed common-wealth". And he seemed to shew more sympathy with the Papists, and more readiness to tolerate them, than he shewed for the Puritans. If they did not plot and scheme for the overthrowing of the established order, but were content to worship quietly, all would be well with them. "Let them assure themselves", he said, "that as I am a friend to their persons, if they be good subjects, so am I a vowed enemy and do denounce mortal war to their errors".<sup>1</sup>

But this speech was almost colourless with respect to James' consciousness of Divine right, compared with his speech at the opening of the fourth session of Parliament<sup>2</sup> in March 1610. "The State of monarchy", he said, "is the supremest thing upon earth: for kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called Gods.....I conclude then.....that as to dispute what God may do is blasphemy.....so is it sedition in

1: Vide Prothero, "Statutes and Documents, 1558-1625", pp. 282-285.

2: Vide, Ibid. pp. 293-295.

subjects to dispute what a king may do in the height of his power..... I will not be content that my power be disputed upon....." He granted in his speech that the Commons had a right to speak and complain about the "just grievances of the people", but he told them "to be careful to avoid three things in the matter of grievances".

1: "that you do not meddle with the main points of government: that is my craft.....I am an old king.....I must not be taught my office".

2: "I would not have you meddle with such ancient rights of mine as I have received from my predecessors....."

3: "Beware to exhibit for grievance anything that is established by a settled law, and whereunto (as you have already had a proof) you know I will never give a plausible answer....."

As might be gathered from the tone of superiority manifested in these speeches, and from the mention of grievances in the latter speech, the Commons had found James a difficult handful to deal with. Besides his manifest disapproval of the Puritan or Presbyterian attempts to reform the church on the lines of their policy pursued under Elizabeth, which policy was discussed by a Committee of the two Houses in May, 1604<sup>1</sup>,

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1: Vide Prothero, "Statutes and Documents" for the Articles debated. pp. 285-286.

James had embarked on a method of raising money by the doubtful means of impositions on merchandise.<sup>1</sup> He had been granted the usual "Tonnage and Poundage", but his expenses, due largely to costly favourites, were beyond his income from those sources. Elizabeth of course had levied impositions and had for example taxed currants at five shillings and six pence per cwt. In James' reign John Bates refused to pay this import duty. The judges however ruled in favour of the King's right to levy such taxes on the ground that since all ports belonged to the King he might forbid the passage of any person or any goods into or out of the kingdom, and therefore he might demand any sum he pleased for allowing such passage.<sup>2</sup>

The Commons however desired to get full control of finance; and it was this desire which moved them to propose the "Great Contract" by which they agreed to pay £1,000,000 a year to the king in lieu of his hereditary rights in wardships, etc. James agreed to this proposal on condition that the House voted £2,000,000, which they ultimately did.<sup>3</sup>

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1: Vide Gardiner, "History of England", Vol. II. p. 12 f

2: Vide Prothero, "Statutes & Documents" pp.340-353.  
Vide Gardiner "Hist. of England" (1899) Vol.II.  
pp. 3-6

3: Ibid pp.295: 299 f, vide Gardiner, Ibid, pp.63-87



The king, however, continued to levy impositions which caused great opposition in the Commons and led to the Petition of July 1610,<sup>1</sup> in which redress was sought. His Majesty was informed that in making laws or "Taxing or imposing upon the subjects' goods or merchandizes" parliament has "justly such a propriety as may not without their consent be altered or changed....." And they demanded that a "law may be made during this Session.....to declare that all impositions set or to be set upon your people, their goods or merchandises, save only by common assent in Parliament, are and shall be void....." In the same Petition a demand was made for a curtailment of the powers and practices of the High Commission Court which had become severe and arbitrary in its dealings with the Puritan nonconformists; and also for limiting the arbitrary will of the king in the matter of Proclamations - "that no fine or forfeiture of goods or other pecuniary or corporal punishment may be inflicted upon your subjects.....unless they shall offend against some law or statute of this realm in force at the time of their offence..."

James however refused to be dictated to by the Commons, and from 1611 till 1621, he ruled without parliament, raising money by the objectionable methods of impositions and

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1: Vide Prothero "Statutes & Documents", pp.302-307.  
 Vide Gardiner "Hist. of England" (1899) Vol.II.  
 pp.82-83

benevolences, the creation of baronetcies, the sale of crown lands and loans.<sup>1</sup> His deplorable financial condition, however, moved him to summon a parliament on April 5th, 1614, but the attitude of the Commons was so fixed on bringing the king to order, that he dissolved it on June 7th.<sup>2</sup>

In his last parliament - 1621-1624 - the Commons asserted their rights and shewed what stuff they were made of, by getting rid of the Lord Chancellor, Bacon, for corruption, and by bringing many courtiers to justice on account of their dealings in monopolies.<sup>3</sup> An Act was passed in 1624 abolishing monopolies except in cases of (a) New inventions, for which a fourteen years monopoly might be granted; (b) Charters of Trading Companies; (c) Certain municipal privileges; (d) certain specified industries, such as the making of glass and gunpowder.<sup>4</sup>

A Petition<sup>5</sup> was also submitted to the king in which the Commons sought to enforce more strictly the disabilities

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- 1: Vide Gardiner, "Hist. of England from the Accession of James I" (1899) Vol.II. pp.200-201.
- 2: Gardiner, Ibid. pp. 233-248.
- 3: Ibid. Vol. IV. pp. 2-104.
- 4: 21 Jacobi, Cap.III. "Statutes at Large" pp.734-739.
- 5: Rushworth, "Historical Collections", Vol. I. pp. 40-43.

of Catholics - this was prompted by James' foreign policy which looked as if a Spanish alliance might lead to Romanist privileges; and another petition<sup>1</sup> in which they re-emphasised their rights against the Crown. After the king's answer<sup>2</sup>, in which he told them practically to mind their own business, the House sent a protestation<sup>3</sup> - in which it was maintained "That the liberties, franchises, privileges and jurisdictions of parliament are the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the subjects of England; and that the arduous and urgent affairs concerning the king, state and defence of the realm, and of the Church of England, and the maintenance and making of laws and redress of mischiefs and grievances.....are proper subjects and matter of counsel and debate in parliament: and that in the handling.....of these businesses every member of the House.....hath and of right ought to have freedom of speech, to propound, treat, reason and bring to conclusion the same: and that the Commons.....have like liberty and freedom to treat of these matters.....as in their judgments shall seem fittest;.....like freedom

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1: Rushworth, pp. 44-46

2: Ibid. pp. 46-52.

3: Ibid. pp. 53-54

from all impeachment, imprisonment and molestation.....  
 for or concerning any speaking, reasoning or declaring of  
 any matter.....touching the parliament or parliament  
 business....."

With the exception of the Act regulating monopolies, the Commons had done little or nothing in James' reign to establish their rights. These had been re-emphasised in petitions and in the House, but no Acts confirming them had been placed on the Statute Book.

The temper of the House however had gradually become keener and more insistent about the Commons' privileges, and Charles I had scarcely ascended the throne before he was made aware of the fact. The new king surpassed his father in his belief in the royal prerogative, but he was less prone to parade this belief in speeches before the House, and more prone to act according to it. His right arm in government was not the parliament - which became more and more distasteful to him as time went on, but favourite ministers, like Buckingham, Land and Strafford, who unfortunately for the monarch flattered his vanity, ministered to his belief in the divine right of kings, and assisted him to embark on enterprises that hastened his downfall. Charles and his favourite, whoever he happened at the time to be, appear to have intentionally flouted the Commons, and with a

reckless irresponsibility to have consulted merely their own wishes. Parliaments, of course, were summoned, but only when the king's financial needs were so dire that no other plan seemed possible. During his reign there were only three parliaments; 1625-6; 1627-8, and the Long Parliament which began in 1640, and which came into open conflict with the king.

The two outstanding grievances which the Commons had against Charles, were his methods of raising money without consulting the House, and his religious policy, which under Laud seemed, as we have said above, to be veering towards Romanism, and was particularly severe on the Puritans, of whom there were strong representatives in each of the parliaments. There was of course in addition to these the resentment caused by the king who tended more and more to ignore parliament and govern without consulting it.

In the first parliament the conflict between the Commons and the king began almost immediately. His marriage treaty with France had committed him to a policy of no persecution of Catholics; and his foreign policy of trying to recover the Palatinate for his brother-in-law, instead of attacking Spain, was unpopular. The Commons therefore demurred when requested to find money for the war,<sup>1</sup> and

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1: Vide, Gardiner, "Documents of the Puritan Revolution"  
P.p. 1-2

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1: Vide, Gardiner, "Documents of the Puritan Revolution"  
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refused to grant it. Soon after an attempt was made to become independent of parliament by seizing Spanish bullion ships, but the enterprise failed miserably. Buckingham was chiefly blamed for the king's policy, and the resentment and opposition of the Commons might be summed up in Sir John Eliot's speech in the House when he said: "Our wills and affections were never more clear, more ready as to his Majesty, but.....bank'd and check'd... by those the king intrusts with the affairs of the Kingdom". And speaking of the subsidy which the House proposed to give, which was much less than the King desired, he said, "I hold the proportion will not suit with what we would give:... ..this is not to be the stint of our affections, but..... to give more upon just occasions".<sup>1</sup> It was a brief but stormy session, and was brought to a close on August 12th after seven weeks existence. Financial necessities compelled Charles to summon the House again the following year. The temper of the Commons however was no less fierce than in the previous session. And a speech by the king did not help to put them in a good humour. "I must tell you" he said, "that I am come here to shew you your errors and.....unparliamentary proceedings.....Remember that Parliaments are altogether in my power for their

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1: Rushworth, Vol. I. p. 220-221.

calling, sitting and dissolution: therefore as I find the fruits of them good or evil, they are to continue or not to be....."<sup>1</sup> So spake autocracy; and for a time he was to summon or dissolve parliament as he willed. But the stalwart puritan members of the House were a force which Charles failed to understand and value aright. They might for a time suffer insult and injury, but their patience had its breaking-point; and the king little knew how nearly that point had been reached.

This session however manifested the spirit of the Commons. Eliot, the leader of the House, began the impeachment of the king's favourite, Buckingham, of crimes and misdemeanours against the state<sup>2</sup>. The leader was imprisoned for his pains, but Charles was compelled to liberate him. And parliament was dissolved as speedily as possible.<sup>3</sup>

In the autumn the king, having failed to collect a "Free Gift"<sup>4</sup>, endeavoured to raise money by the imposition of 'Tonnage and Poundage'<sup>5</sup>, a source of income that had been usually granted for life to the Monarch, but in Charles'

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1: Vide Gardiner "Documents of the Puritan Revolution"  
pp. 4-6

2: Vide Ibid. pp. 7-44 for the Impeachment and the Duke's defence.

3: Rushworth, Vol. I. p. 362.

4: Gardiner, Ibid. pp. 46-49.

5: Ibid, vide pp. 49-51.



case was given only for one year. He also resorted to "forced loans", by which "he that is set at one hundred pounds in lands (is) to lend us a hundred pounds in money, and so after that rate for a more or less sum. And he that is set at a hundred pounds in goods to lend us a hundred marks; (a mark being  $6/8$ ) and he that is set at ten pounds goods, to lend us twenty nobles: (a noble being  $3/2$ ) and so pro rata".<sup>1</sup>

Oppressive means were adopted to raise the money such as the billeting of soldiers on the obstinate, and shutting up the intractable in prison.<sup>2</sup>

Five Knights who had been imprisoned for their opposition to the King's measures now obtained from the King's bench a writ of Habeas Corpus, by which it was specified that the body of any captive committed to prison must be produced in Court by the gaoler, together with the charge against him, so that, if unlawfully detained, the judge might order his release. The prisoners' lawyers pleaded that those who had been imprisoned by Charles should be tried or let out on bail, and denied, by the rights of the Magna Charta, the King's authority to detain them.<sup>3</sup> The judges, however, out of fear of, or favouritism to, Charles, sent the prisoners back to gaol, but the King soon set them free.

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1: Vide Gardiner "Documents of the Puritan Revolution", pp. 51-57.

2: Gardiner, History of England, Vol. VI (1901) p. 156 f

3: Vide, "Documents of Puritan Revolution", pp. 57-64.

The Commons, however, were not to be vanquished by the King, and when the next parliament met in 1628 they drew up the "petition of Right".<sup>1</sup> The petition declared:-

- 1: That loans and exactions of money without consent of Parliament are illegal;
- 2: That no one shall be imprisoned without cause shewn;
- 3: That the billeting of soldiers and sailors on people against their will is illegal;
- 4: That no commissions should be issued to military officers to try subjects by martial law in time of peace.

The King after some hesitation gave his assent to the petition of June 7th, and a great step forward had been made in establishing the rights of the people.

On June 25th a Remonstrance<sup>2</sup> was drawn up about the King's levying of Tonnage and Poundage, which declared "That the receiving of Tonnage and Poundage, and other impositions not granted by Parliament, is a breach of the fundamental liberties of the Kingdom, and contrary to your Majesty's royal answer to the said Petition of Rights". The following day, however, the King came to the House and made it plain that the Commons' assumptions were not his intentions. "As for Tonnage and Poundage", he said, "it is

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Gardiner

1: "Dods". pp. 66-70.

2: Vide Gardiner, "Ibid", pp. 70-73. Gardiner's  
"History of England" Vol. VI. (1901) pp. 323-324.

a thing I cannot want (do without), and was never intended by you to ask, nor meant by me - I am sure - to grant".<sup>1</sup> And he continued to levy the tax.

After an adjournment the House met again on March 2nd 1629, when the Speaker, Finch, announced that Charles had decreed that Parliament should adjourn forthwith. "A great shout of 'No' arose. And as the Speaker was leaving the Chair, two stout members, Denzil Holles and Benjamin Valentine, held him down struggling in his chair, while Eliot moved three resolutions, branding as enemies of the kingdom those who brought in innovations in religion, or advised the levying of Tonnage and Poundage without a Parliamentary grant, or voluntarily paid those duties. A scene of wild confusion followed. Hot and reckless speeches were uttered. The doors were locked though an usher was knocking at them with a message from the King. The Speaker refused to put Eliot's resolutions. At last Holles put them himself, and loud shouts of 'Aye' declared them carried. The Commons then streamed out to hear their prorogation".<sup>2</sup>

During the next eleven years no Parliament was summoned, and in both State and Church autocracy was carried to its limits. The King continued to levy Tonnage and Poundage:

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1: Vide Gardiner, Ibid. pp. 73-74; also "History", Ibid, pp. 324-325.

2: Gardiner, "History of England" Vol. VII. p. 68f

he evaded the Monopolies Act, and, at the suggestion of the Attorney General Noy, a new tax, "Ship Money" was imposed not only on maritime, but also on inland districts.<sup>1</sup>

The last was a new tax of a direct rather than indirect kind, and it fell on all knights; and it was imposed in a time of peace when the defence of the realm by sea was not called for. Hampden<sup>2</sup> made a test case of the matter. Charles also took the opinion of his judges. But the result was that the judges favoured the King's measure. Sir Robert Berkeley said ".....by the fundamental law of England, the Parliament is commune consilium regis et regni, that it is the greatest.....and supreme court in the Kingdom,.....yet give me leave to say that it is but a consilium:.....the King may call it, prorogue it, dissolve it, at his pleasure....."<sup>3</sup> And on the same reasoning, the King might levy taxes if there is need of them without consulting the House.

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1: Gardiner, "History of England", Vol. VII. p. 356 f for the King's Writ of Ship-Money, vide "Documents of Puritan Revolution", pp. 105-108.

2: Gardiner, "Documents of the Puritan Revolution", pp. 109-115.

3: Ibid. p. 123. op. pp. 115-124.

In 1640 a new Parliament had to be summoned. Laud, the high-Church Archbishop, having attempted to force Episcopacy on Scotland, had brought the two nations into armed conflict, and Charles needed money for the war. This provided occasion for the Commons to air their grievances once more. John Pym was appointed leader of the House and Hampden, who had refused to pay "Ship Money" ably seconded him. Pym demanded that redress of grievances should be made before supplies were considered.<sup>1</sup> Charles promised to refrain from levying "Ship Money" on condition that twelve subsidies - nearly a million pounds - were granted. Beyond this the King refused to go and the Commons were equally obdurate. In just over three weeks the "Short Parliament", as this was called, was dissolved.<sup>2</sup>

By November the same year the King, "at his wits end for money", was compelled to summon another Parliament. Urged on by Strafford, Charles had continued the war with Scotland and the tide of fortune had gone against him. Northumberland and Durham were being held by the Scots as security for £850 a day which the King, by the treaty of Ripon, had promised to pay them until a final settlement was reached.<sup>3</sup>

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1: Vide Rushworth "Historical Collections", Vol.III.  
pp. 1131-1136.

2: Vide, Ibid. pp. 1136-1166 - for debates and speeches in House.

3: Ibid, p. 1295.

When the Commons assembled on November 3rd it soon became evident that their patience with the King's disregard of the House was exhausted, and that they meant to obtain a firmer hold on the reins of government. Pym and Hampden were again the leaders in the attack. Almost immediately Pym moved the impeachment of Laud - "the root and ground of all our miseries" - on a charge of high treason, and the Archbishop was committed to the Tower where he remained until his execution in January 1645.<sup>1</sup> Strafford who had "had two chief aims - to make the King's rule absolute, and to obtain money for him; and in the pursuit of these.....trampled on all" quickly followed Laud, and paid the extreme penalty for his share in the King's policy on May 12th, 1641.<sup>2</sup>

Having removed Charles' two ablest ministers Parliament turned its attention to remedying the evils under which the people had suffered. A whole series of reforms was carried out. The present parliament secured its own existence by forcing the King to accept an Act that it should not be dissolved without the consent of the members; and it made it illegal if not impossible for the King to rule indefinitely without summoning Parliament by passing the

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1: Gardiner, "Hist. of England", Vol. IX. pp. 249, 296, 297.

2: Ibid. Vol. IX. p. 370

"Triennial Act" which provided that not more than three years should elapse without a meeting of Parliament, and that if the King failed to summon it other means should be taken to ensure its assembly.<sup>1</sup> The levying of Tonnage and Poundage<sup>2</sup> was forbidden. The Star Chamber<sup>3</sup>, the Court of High Commission and the Council of the North - all of which had been strong instruments in the arbitrary government of the king - were abolished.<sup>4</sup> Ship-Money was declared illegal<sup>5</sup>, and the new impositions such as fines for not taking up knighthood, and for encroaching on forest lands, were condemned.<sup>6</sup>

Charles, however, was not happy about the curtailment of his powers which Parliament seemed determined to impose, visited Scotland in the summer of this year in the hope of winning the Scots to take up arms on his side against the Parliament, and was no doubt responsible for the attempt made to arrest Argyll and the Presbyterian leaders, known as the "Incident".<sup>7</sup>

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- 1: 16 Caroli, I. Cap.I. Statutes at Large, Vol.IV. pp 797  
 2: 16 Caroli I. Cap.8. Ibid. p. 809 - 804  
 3: 16 Caroli I. Cap.10 Ibid. pp.810-814  
 4: 16 Caroli I. Cap.11 Ibid. pp.814-815.  
 5: 16 Caroli I. Cap.14 Ibid. pp.817-818.  
 6: 16 Caroli I. Cap.16.20 Ibid. pp. 822-824; 827-828.  
 7: Gardiner. "History of England", Vol. X. pp.23-25

When Parliament therefore reassembled in the Autumn its distrust of the king forced Pym and the reforming party to draw up the "Grand Remonstrance".<sup>1</sup> In this long document of two hundred and four clauses all the unconstitutional acts of Charles from the beginning of his reign were set forth. In the petition accompanying it, they attributed the evils of the reign in the Church to the Bishops, and in the State to the kind of ministers the King employed. And they requested that the Bishops should be deprived of their votes in the House of Lords, and of their "immoderate power usurped over the clergy, and other your good subjects...."; and with regard to the King's ministers they requested that "Your Majesty will vouchsafe to employ such persons in your great and public affairs, and take such to be near you in places of trust, as your parliament may have cause to confide in....."

This was drawn up on December 1st, 1641. On the 23rd the King sent an evasive but polite reply<sup>2</sup>, in which he said, "It is our intention that no failing on your part shall make us fail in ours of giving all due satisfaction to the desires of our people in a parliamentary way".

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1: Vide "Gardiner", "Documents of the Puritan Revolution", pp. 202-232. Rushworth Vol. IV. pp. 436-453.

2: Vide. Ibid. pp. 233-236.



The King, however, was as firmly bent on maintaining his long enjoyed privileges as Parliament was on curtailing them. And the clash came when Charles went down to the House in January, 1642, and attempted to seize the five members<sup>1</sup>. War was inevitable from that moment. Deplorable as the Civil War and the execution of Charles may have been, under the circumstances they were unavoidable. The growth of the idea of freedom among the Puritan members of the Commons, as well as among the increasing ranks of Puritans in the country, made it impossible to settle down under the evils of absolutism. Had Charles been amenable to reason, progress along the path of freedom indicated by the Long Parliament, might have been achieved with less dire consequences both to the King and the people: and such peaceable progress might have obviated the reaction of arbitrary rule which was attempted by the later Stuart Kings. But Charles and the Long Parliament represented two bodies moving with considerable force in opposite directions with the inevitable result that when the clash came the consequences were shattering.

Fortunately for the English people Parliament was the mightier force and suffered, therefore, less than Charles. Autocracy on the throne of England had to pay a severe penalty

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1: Pym, Hampden, Denzil Holles, Arthur Hazelrigge and William Strode. For the attitude of the House, see Rushworth, Vol. IV. pp. 484-486.

but the rights of the people were largely secured. Sovereign power for the time being was transferred from the hands of the King to the hands of Parliament.

The Supremacy of the latter is made evident by the Militia Ordinance<sup>1</sup> of March 5th, 1642, which not only gave power to Parliament to raise an army, but also by the wording of the ordinance ignored the authority of the King: "It is ordained by the Lords and Commons now in parliament assembled that....." In the draft of the ordinance of February 16th, it had read, "It is ordained by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, etc". But these words had been deleted after a considerable debate in the House, when "Some declared that the power of the militia was solely in the King, and ought to be left to him, and that Parliament never did, nor ought to meddle with the same", "Others were of opinion that the King had not this power in him, but that it was in Parliament, and that if the King refused to order it according to the advice of Parliament, that then they, by the law, might do it without him".<sup>2</sup>

Parliament had no intention when the Civil War began of doing more than bring the King to acknowledge the rights and liberties of the Commons. It was the King's refusal to acknowledge these rights, together with his attempt to crush

1: Vide Gardiner, "Constitution Documents", pp. 245-247: also pp. 254-258 and 261.

2: Rushworth, "Collections" Vol. IV. pp. 516-526.

Parliament by persuading the Scots' forces to withdraw their support from Parliament and throw in their lot with him, that made his removal from the throne inevitable. The nineteen propositions sent to Charles at York in June 1642 were prefaced by words which breathe a spirit of loyalty: "Your Majesty's most humble and faithful subjects, the Lords and Commons in Parliament, having nothing in their thoughts and desires more precious and of higher esteem.....than the just and faithful performance of their duty to your Majesty and this Kingdom....."<sup>1</sup> The Civil War had not begun then. And it was the Parliament's last attempt to bring Charles to reason from their point of view. The propositions demanded merely the setting right of what they considered to be unjust: the employment of Ministers approved by the House; that affairs of State to be considered, and policy sanctioned, by Parliament; that the highest officials of State to be chosen "with the approbation of both Houses"; that the King's children be taught by approved teachers, and that their marriages should have the sanction of parliament; that laws against Papists be enforced; that the Church be reformed, etc. And the same loyal spirit is seen in the preamble to the "Oxford Treaty" submitted in February, 1643. "We your Majesty's most humble and faithful subjects, the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled,

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1: Rushworth, Historical Collections", Vol. IV. p. 772

having in our thoughts the Glory of God, Your Majesty's honour etc....."<sup>1</sup> The object of the propositions again was to win the king to peace with parliament on the understanding that he disbanded his army, left delinquents to the judgment of the House, disarmed papists, gave his assent to the "Act for disabling all Persons in Holy Order"<sup>2</sup> and to whatever Bill might be submitted by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster; that he consent to the Nineteen propositions, and to Parliament's right to raise an army, etc. The tone of parliament, however, is changed in the propositions submitted at Uxbridge<sup>3</sup> in November 1644, and at Newcastle, July 1646. The King's persistence in his attempt to defeat parliament no doubt accounts for this. Without any expressions of loyalty they demand that the king shall by Act of Parliament declare "null, suppressed and forbidden", all his declarations and proclamations against parliament and the Scot's Estates during this period of conflict; that he shall sign the solemn League and Covenant; that he shall sanction the Act for disabling Bishops etc. and the treaty made with the Scots at Edinburgh, November 29th, 1643; that he legalise the Westminster Assembly; that a reformation of the Church on the lines of the Covenant be carried out; that Jesuits, Priests and Papists be more effectually disabled; that papist's children be educated by protestants; that he

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1: Rushworth, Historical Collections. Vol. V. p. 165  
 2: Vide Supra pp. 208-209.  
 3: Rushworth, Vol. V. p. 849 f.

assent to the Act for Sabbath observance, etc: that he accept £100,000 per annum in lieu of dues levied by him on Wardships, fines, licences, tenures and knights services; that an act of oblivion be passed except in the case of persons named in the propositions; that parliament be empowered to determine the armed forces by land and sea, and raise the money for their support; that Parliament shall conclude peace or war with foreign princes; etc."<sup>1</sup>

Similar terms<sup>2</sup> were offered to the king in July, 1646, nearly two years later, after he had surrendered himself to the Scot's army, and been removed to Newcastle. The principal demands were that he should take the Covenant and accept the Presbyterian system; that the militia and the fleet be controlled by Parliament for twenty years and after that to return to the crown only under conditions fixed by Parliament; that a number of the King's followers be not pardoned, and the treaties between England and Scotland be confirmed.

The King's answer was to the effect that the propositions "do import<sup>so</sup> great alterations in government both in the Church and Kingdom, as it is very difficult to return a particular and positive answer, before a full debate....." And he desired such a debate, saying, "that he may make known to them such his reasonable demands, as he is most assured will be very

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- 1: Vide Gardiner, "Constitutional Documents", pp. 275-286.
- 2: Vide Rushworth "Collections", VI. pp. 309-317;  
Gardiner, "Constitutional Documents", pp. 290-306.

much conducive to that peace which all good men desire and pray for, by the settling of religion, the just privileges of Parliament, with the freedom and propriety of the subject". But he assures them "that he can never condescend unto what is absolutely destructive to that just power which.....he is born unto....."<sup>1</sup>.

That was in August 1646. On December 20th the same year he wrote asking for such a debate since any answer he might give on paper, "would be subject to misinformations and misconstructions".<sup>2</sup> In the third answer<sup>3</sup>, May 12th, 1647, he says, "he cannot give his consent to all of them" (the propositions), but is prepared to grant presbyterian government in the Church for three years if he may be free in his own household to worship as he pleases. He is still doubtful about taking the "Covenant" himself, but willing to accept their wishes regarding papists, and Sabbath observance, etc. As to the militia he will grant their command of it for ten, rather than twenty years, afterwards it must revert to the monarch. The King was at this time at Holmby House from which he was kidnapped and taken to Newmarket on June 3rd to the charge of Cromwell's Army. On August 1st the Independent

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- 1: Vide Gardiner, *ibid*, pp. 306-307. "The King's First Answer".  
 2: *Ibid*. p. 308. "The King's Second Answer".  
 3: *Ibid*. pp. 311-316.

Army submitted the "Hheads of the Proposals".<sup>1</sup> The chief proposals were that the present parliament should end within a year; that henceforth Parliament be called every two years, and sit not less than 120 days, and not more than 240 days. That representatives to the Commons be elected from all Counties, proportionate to the "rates they bear in the common charges and burdens of the kingdom"; that elections be free; that liberty of speech be allowed in the House; that the Lords and Commons have the final judicial power, which the King cannot infringe; that grand jurymen be appointed for Assizes who shall have power to nominate Justices of the Peace; that sea and land forces be for ten years under the command of Parliament, who shall raise the necessary funds; that a Council of State be appointed to superintend the disposal of the militia. In religion all coercive power and authority of Bishops, etc. must be taken away, and punishment by the civil power for religious offences must cease; that penalties for not worshipping according to the Prayer-Book, and for not attending Church, and for meeting for worship in other than the Anglican way, to be repealed; that the Covenant be not enforced upon any. If the King agreed to these conditions he was to "be restored to a condition of safety, honour and freedom, without diminution to (his) personal rights, or further limitation to the exercise

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1: Vide, Rushworth "Collections" Vol. VII. pp. 731-736.  
 "Constitutional Documents", pp. 316, 326.

of the regal power, than according to the particulars foregoing". Two other matters in the "Proposals" are worth noticing as they affect the liberty of the subject.

1. "That the just and necessary liberty of the people to represent their grievances and desires by way of petition, may be cleared and vindicated....."

2. "That the common grievances of this people may be speedily considered of, and effectually redressed....."

Among these are the removal of excise duties on necessary commodities; the prevention of encroachments on land; the taking away of monopolies; a more equitable distribution of taxation; a better system than tithes for ministers' maintenance; the prevention of debtors from escaping their debts by merely going to prison, if they have money to discharge their debts.

The King was more inclined to accept the proposals of the Army than those submitted by Parliament,<sup>1</sup> but flattered by the seeming anxiety of both to win his consent, he further intrigued with the Presbyterian Party and after his flight to the Isle of Wight sent a letter<sup>2</sup> to the Lords in which he said

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1: Vide "The King's Answer to the Propositions of Parliament", Gardiner, "Constitutional Documents", pp. 326-27.

2: Vide, Gardiner, Ibid. pp. 328-332.



that while he could not consent to the abolishing of Episcopacy, he was willing to allow Presbyterian government to continue for three years, provided that "full liberty to all.....who shall differ upon conscientious grounds from that settlement" be granted. This he sought for himself and his Anglican followers. He would also consent to the Militia being under the control of Parliament during his life-time, and to ministers of State being appointed by Parliament, and to a repeal of all his declarations and proclamations against the present Parliament, and to an universal Act of Oblivion.

This was in November 1647. In the meantime however the "Agreement of the People"<sup>1</sup> had been drawn up by the Army in which was set out a plan for a more equitable division of the country into parliamentary boroughs: and it proposed that the present Parliament be dissolved in September the following year: that henceforth there should be biennial parliaments as suggested in the "Head of Proposals"; that parliament should be the supreme authority though the power of the representative rests with, and is derived from those whom he represents. Such a Parliament was to be entrusted with the ordering of religion, but no compulsion in this matter must be exercised over the people; so likewise there

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1: Vide Gardiner, "Constitutional Docs". pp. 333-335.

must be no impressment to furnish soldiers and sailors; and all men must be equal before the law. "These things we declare to be our native rights....."

On December 26th, however, Charles signed the "Engagement"<sup>1</sup> with the Scots, promising to confirm the Covenant by Act of Parliament, as well as the Presbyterian government in worship for three years, and to suppress all other sects as Anabaptists, Brownists, Separatists, Independents, etc. Thus began the second Civil War in which the King and all lovers of Presbytery, which included the parliamentary forces, were opposed to the Independent Army.

The events of this second conflict do not concern us except to say that within twelve months Cromwell and the Army were victorious and all powerful, and Charles' fate was sealed. On December 6th, 1648, Colonel Pride cleared the House of Commons of all its Royalist and Presbyterian sympathisers, and the "Rump" of Independents alone remained. On January 15th, 1649, the army submitted to the House the "Agreement of the People"<sup>2</sup>. The 'Rump' however continued to sit on in spite of the "Agreement", and a Council of State<sup>3</sup>

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1: Vide Gardiner, "Constitutional Docs". pp. 347-352.

2: As thus presented, vide Gardiner "Constitutional Doc". , pp. 359-371.

3: Ibid. pp. 381-383.

was appointed as the executive government on February, 13th. In March Acts were passed abolishing the office of king, and the House of Lords<sup>1</sup>, and in May a further act declared England to be a Commonwealth and Free State.<sup>2</sup> In September the following year the Act of Uniformity, and the Act imposing penalties for not coming to church, and the "Act for retaining the Queen's subjects in their due obedience"<sup>3</sup>, were repealed.<sup>4</sup>

In 1553, however, Cromwell, freed from his engagements in Scotland, and Ireland, dissolved the Rump<sup>5</sup> and elected the "Little Parliament"<sup>6</sup> on lines wholly contradictory to the "Agreement". He was no doubt moved to this autocratic policy by fear lest in the unsettled state of public opinion a parliament might be elected that would defeat his hopes and plans for a larger liberty in state and church. And on December 16th he allowed himself to be elected Lord Protector under the "Instrument of Government"<sup>7</sup> drawn up by the Council of Officers. By this the supreme legislative

- 1: Scobell, "Acts & Ordinances" Pt.II. pp.7-8
- 2: Ibid, p. 30.
- 3: i.e. I.Elizabeth, Cap.2. XXIII. Eliz. Cap.1. XXXV.Eliz. Cap.1. Statutes at Large, pp. 117 f; 374 f; 468 f.
- 4: Scobell, II. pp. 131 f.
- 5: Vide Supra, pp. 231-232.
- 6: Vide Supra, p. 232-233
- 7: Vide Gardiner. Ibid. pp. 405-417.

authority was vested "in one person (the Protector), and the people assembled in Parliament". Arrangements were provided on lines similar to the "Agreement" for a representative House of Commons, which could not "be adjourned, prorogued, or dissolved, without their own consent", and which shall meet "once in every third year". It was also laid down that the office of Protector should be elective and not hereditary; that he should have no absolute power to veto a Bill; that laws be made by Parliament, though the Council might make Ordinances which retained the force of law unless parliament objected to them. Members of Parliament must be "persons of known integrity, fearing God, and of good conversation, and.....of the age of twenty-one years".

The "Instrument of Government", with its insistence on the supremacy of the House of Commons, and a freely elected Parliament, marks a definite step forward towards that political freedom which England still enjoys. Under the "Instrument", however, there was to be neither a House of Lords nor a Monarch. It was a republican constitution. But in 1657, Parliament presented to Cromwell the "Humble Petition and Advice".<sup>1</sup> In this Petition the

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1: Vide Gardiner, "Constitutional Docs". pp. 447-464.  
Scobell, "Acts & Ordinances", Pt.II. pp. 378-383.

desire for a second House and a Monarchy, or what was very like a Monarchy, was explicitly made: "That your Highness will be pleased by and under the name and style of Lord Protector of the Commonwealth.....to hold and exercise the office of Chief Magistrate.....(and) be pleased during your lifetime to appoint and declare who shall, immediately after your death, succeed you in the government.....". The office of Protector was for life and not, as in modern republics, for a term of years: and this office further, though not hereditary, was to be filled by the Protector's nominee, and not by the votes of Parliament or people.

It also requested, "that.....for the future (Cromwell) be pleased to call Parliaments consisting of two Houses.....". Thus the republic was to become a democracy. And it is on the lines of democracy rather than republicanism that the English Constitution has since developed. After the chastening experiences of the reigns of Charles II and James II, when Monarchy was welcomed back to the throne unconditionally, the rights of democracy were assured to the English people by the "Declaration of Rights" submitted to William and Mary in 1689.

This was the last of the great charters of English liberty, and it substituted for the theory of Divine Right of Kings, the theory that the King only reigned by the will of the people, and that his ministers were national ministers

answerable not to the king but to the nation, whose representatives and servants they were. Briefly, the declaration made illegal the King's suspending of parliaments, or ruling without one; the levying of money for a longer period than granted by Parliament, and keeping a standing army without consent of Parliament. The Court of High Commission in Ecclesiastical causes which James II had re-established was made illegal, and it declared that subjects have the right to petition the King, and that Parliament should be freely elected, be frequently held and have free speech. And it was resolved that "for the safety and welfare of this Protestant Kingdom" all persons "who profess the Popish religion, or marry a Papist, shall be incapable to inherit or possess the Crown".

This charter was really the crystallisation of the scattered ideals of liberty which had animated Englishmen since the days of Elizabeth, and for which they had been striving strenuously for half a century. And in this achievement we see the effect not only of the general Puritan urge towards freedom, but in particular the conception of freedom that was cherished and fought for by the radical or Independent branch of the Puritans. For however distasteful the republic may have been to many Englishmen when Cromwell, backed by the Army, ruled as a Dictator, it was nevertheless largely on the principles of the 'Agreement of

the People', and the proposals of the 'Instrument of Government', that the 'Declaration of Rights' was framed. And these principles have continued to guide and animate later developments on the pathway to freedom.

The Parliament which invited William and Mary to the throne also, after the disappointing experiences suffered under Charles II and James II, sought to safeguard the interests of Protestantism and the peoples' rights, by substituting a new oath of allegiance in place of the old oaths of supremacy which were abrogated. This new oath was drawn up in February 1689<sup>1</sup> and confirmed<sup>by</sup> the 'Act for the abrogating of the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance'<sup>2</sup>, but in the meantime Parliament had agreed on a Coronation Oath which must be taken by the new rulers and their successors.<sup>3</sup> This new Act did not give unlimited supremacy to the Monarch, but bound him down to a certain policy in Church and State. The Archbishop or Bishop who conducted the Coronation ceremony must ask the King; 'Will you solemnly promise and swear to govern the People of this Kingdom.....according to the Statutes in Parliament agreed on, and the Laws and Customs of the same?' 'Will you to your Power cause Law and Justice in Mercy to be executed in

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- 1: 1. Guil. et. Mar. Cap. 1 (Statutes at Large Vol.V. pp. 497-498).  
 2: Ibid. Cap. VIII. (Ibid, pp. 503-507.)  
 3: 1 Guil. et Mar. Cap. VI. (Ibid. pp. 501-502.)

all your Judgments?" "Will you to the utmost of your Power maintain the Laws of God, the true Profession of the Gospel and the Protestant Reformed Religion established by Law?....." And "the King and Queen laying his and her Hand upon the Holy Gospel", had to answer "The Things which I have here promised I will perform and keep, So help me God".

And the subject's rights were further safeguarded by the "Act declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject ....."<sup>1</sup>

There seems little doubt that the movement towards freedom of conscience in religion, and freedom to have a say in the government of the nation, was animated by, if not born of, the religious consciousness of the value of the individual. This note had been struck by Martin Luther in his doctrine of justification by faith and emphasised by Calvin. Salvation became an individual concern. Instead of blindly entrusting the Eternal welfare of one's soul to a Church which demanded implicit obedience, a man must work out his own Salvation. And the Scriptures rather than the traditional doctrines of the Church were the only infallible guide.

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1: 1 Guill. et Mar. Session 2 Cap.II. (Ibid. pp 538 f)



It was this outlook that gave rise to Puritanism, which was a Protestant protest against the Catholic or traditional tendencies of Anglicanism. And if in the effort to establish a scriptural church organization, enthusiasm for a fixed idea of what that Church should be, made one section of the Puritans blind to the real implications of 'freedom of conscience', nevertheless that is really what they aimed at; for only in such freedom to worship according to the Scriptures they believed could the individual save his soul.

And it was out of this conception of the value of the individual in the sight of God, that there was born that demand for a voice in the government of the country. Just as the spiritual destinies of the individual depended largely upon himself, so the material destinies did. And since the Puritans refused the autocratic government of a Church in the former matter, so they resisted the autocratic government of a king in the latter. Not only so, but seeing that a man's spiritual destinies may be, as they were under Elizabeth and the Stuarts, to a great extent determined by any ruler who claims supremacy in the Church, such power must be limited. Man must have some part in working out his own salvation - both spiritual and material.

For this conception of human values, and for all that was attempted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to establish these values, our debt to Puritanism is great.

## CHAPTER FOUR.

### PURITANISM AND ENGLISH LITERATURE.

Milton in his tract on 'Divorce' claimed the right to the dissolution of marriage on the ground of incompatibility of temperament and ideals. He wrote; "That indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindering, and ever likely to hinder the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace; is a greater reason of divorce than natural frigidity....."<sup>1</sup>

When Puritanism and English literature came face to face in the sixteenth century, there was no falling in love with each other and consequently no marriage. And the reason was incompatibility of temper and ideals. They represented totally different points of view. There was an indisposition, an unfitness and contrariety of mind between them.

Men of letters looked out upon life from the human end. This attitude of mind was the spiritual contribution of the Renaissance; or to put it another way, this way of looking at life and the world was the renaissance - the

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1: "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce". Milton's Prose Works (Ed. Bohn) Vol. III. p. 185.

re-birth of man's feeling that he counted for something in virtue of his powers of mind, and that by his own efforts he must win through and conquer. Humanism, which is the term generally applied to this new attitude of mind, was the result of the dissemination of the almost forgotten literature of Greece and Rome, which was occasioned by the fall of Constantinople into the hands of the Turks in 1453. A new world of literature was opened up to scholars and writers. And not only did this provide models of style in writing and suggest ideas, but it inspired men to emulate the poets and dramatists of this re-discovered past. Thus the Humanists tended to break away from the mediaeval attitude of mind which, under the discipline of the Roman Church, had looked at life and the world from the divine end. Hitherto the Church, which spoke with the supposed infallibility of the Voice of God, had prescribed man's duty and his beliefs. But Humanism was out to "prove all this, and hold fast that which is good". It was a liberating of man's mind from "authority", and an embarkation, under the guidance of the reason and the senses, on a voyage of discovery on the free and open seas of "experience".

The Puritans, on the other hand, looked at life and the world from the divine end. In this they resembled the Romanists. In every other respect, as we have seen in the foregoing pages, they were poles apart. But in this

particular they were even more thorough-going than the Romanists. The Puritans of course, substituted the Bible for the Church. But never did Romanist believe more sincerely in the infallibility of the Church than the Puritans believed in the infallibility of the Scriptures. They were the absolute guide in all matters of faith and conduct; they were the oracles of God written down for all men to read. And as we have seen, according to the Puritans' reading of the Scriptures, the path of right was a very narrow one. Most of the simple pleasures and amusements of life were unlaw<sup>ful</sup> to the christian man. Even Baxter who was a liberal Puritan compared with many, seems to have thanked God that he had never been addicted to "pastimes", and expressed regret that in his youth he had been enamoured of fictional literature. And the Puritan's attitude to the stage is manifested by the Act of 1647, which virtually closed the theatres.

In other words, a breach between men of letters who followed the traditions of the humanists, and the Puritans, whose lode-star was the Bible in the literal inspiration of which they believed, was made inevitable by the fact that the former having overthrown many of the restrictions of the Mediaeval Church, assumed the right to explore and write about the whole gamut of human experience, while the latter condemned a great many things in human experience as being of the world, the flesh and the devil.

Most of the Elizabethan poets and dramatists, for instance, looked at life from the purely human side. When the poets write of love - the almost entirely engrossing theme of Elizabethan poetry - it is human love, the love of man for woman, not divine love. Sometimes this love becomes sensual in its imagery and suggestion as in Marlowe's "Hero and Leander". Often however it is pure and ennobling as in many of Shakespeare's Sonnets, as for example:

"When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes.  
 I all alone beweep my outcaste state  
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries  
 And look upon myself and curse my fate  
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
 Featured like him, like him with friends possessed  
 Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,  
 With what I most enjoy contented least.  
 When in this state myself almost despising  
 Haply I think on thee, and then my soul  
 Like to the lark at break of day arising  
 From sullen earth sings hymns at heaven's gate.  
 For thy rich love remembered such wealth brings,  
 That then I scorn to change my state with Kings".

But it is human love, however pure and beautiful; and there is no reference to Divine love. It does not mean, of course, that these poets did not believe in the Divine love, or that they were necessarily irreligious. All it means is that they did not conceive it to be within their province to sing of other than human love.

With the dramatists too, the object is to depict human life under varied conditions. Man's desires and ambitions, hopes and fears, passions and appetites, are seen working themselves out to a comic or tragic end. The plays of Ben Johnson or Shakespeare might be called studies in character, or psychological studies. Men and women of different types appear on the scene in action and reaction to one another and to circumstances. There is little or no attempt to preach or to draw a moral or to hold up an ideal. But herein is seen the genius of Shakespeare or Johnson in particular, that by merely allowing their characters to speak and act according to their own individual propensities, the need for drawing a moral is removed. Their conduct, good or bad, leads to the natural and inevitable consequences of such conduct.

On the whole the Elizabethan playwrights were moral teachers without attempting to be so. But we can understand the quarrel of the Puritans with plays even of the high moral value of Shakespeare's tragedies. In the first place, God may be assumed but he is never introduced into the plays. And it would not be difficult to draw the conclusion that fate or chance rather than God is the disposer of events. For instance, after that remarkable speech of Macbeth's,

"Canst thou minister to a mind diseased,  
 Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
 Raze out the written troubles of the brain,  
 And with some sweet oblivions antidote  
 Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff  
 Which weighs upon the heart?"<sup>1</sup> -

There is no attempt made to point this diseased soul to the healing stream in which he might have found hope and life. The human facts in all their stark horror are portrayed, and they move relentlessly on to the dire tragedy, the suffering soul helpless and alone. Religion has no real place in the drama of the period.

In the second place there was much in the drama that was suggestive of immorality, if not grossly immoral. And while such plays might have a high moral value to those who could see the moral and be influenced by it, nevertheless as a spectacle on the stage, or as literature read for pleasure, ideas might be suggested to the masses that merely ministered to an impure imagination and whetted the appetite for the accursed thing.

There also grew up a notion among the Puritans in the later days, though we don't find it in the Elizabeth period, that play-acting and the reading of fictional

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1: Macbeth. Act V. Scene III.

literature were wrong in themselves, quite apart from the morality of the play or literature. Life was too serious a business to be wiled away in an imaginative world of literature and make-believe, where heathen gods and goddesses besporked themselves in unseemly and shameful ways, and where Knights exercised their prowess for mere human love that often boarded on the sensual. And not only were such stories a waste of time to those who had a soul to save, but were even an enticement to evil, a blinding of the soul to its real business in life; and such stories were a lie, a prevarication, a dissembling of the real facts of life. Thus the spirit of Puritanism and the spirit behind the tendencies in literature and the drama could never be fast friends. They saw life from different points of view, and ascribed to it different ends. To men of letters life seemed to be meant for pleasure and happiness which was to be sought for by a wise gratification of the human desires, appetites and instincts. To the Puritan the object of life might be happiness too, but it was a happiness that was not to be found by the gratification of human appetites and instincts, by the way of pleasure and amusement, but by a suppression of these appetites and desires, which were of the world, the flesh and the devil. The Puritan's happiness might be deferred to the next world; it was the reward of escaping from the enticements of this world which was a "Vanity Fair" and a "City of Destruction".



The impact of Puritan ideas and ideals on the tendencies of literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was naturally unfavourable to the continued growth of that literature which had its sources in Classical, French and Italian models. Puritanism, it seems to us, tended to dam up the stream and make it impossible for the 'Golden Age' of English literature to evolve into an even more brilliant age. Fetters of disapproval were put upon poets and dramatists, and their enthusiasm was curbed.

This does not necessarily imply that the influence of Puritanism on English literature was baneful. All it means is that Puritanism arrested some tendencies in literature and gave to it other tendencies. And a final judgment on the influence of Puritanism on English literature will naturally vary with the ideals held as to what constitutes good literature. If the criterion is "Art for art's sake", and no questions as to moral values or didactic purposes are to be considered, then perhaps, nay almost certainly, the judgment will go against the Puritans. But if these values are to be taken into account, then the influence of Puritanism might be judged not unfavourably to the true purposes of literature.

The influence of Puritan thought and ideals on literature is not so evident in the Elizabethan period as in the

following century. That is quite natural since the Puritans were chiefly engaged during the second half of the sixteenth century, in working out their own ideas of church government and seeking to have them adopted by the Queen and Parliament. The Puritans had no men of letters of their own during that period except controversialists who used whatever art they had in writing on behalf of the immediate controversy before them - the drawing up of their system of church order and discipline, and the defence or advocacy of the same. On the other hand these were years of such Puritan activity and suffering for conscience sake, that it is inconceivable that contemporary writers - poets and dramatists - could be altogether ignorant of their ideas and ideals. But be that as it may, the influence of Puritanism on these writers is not very apparent.

We can understand this to some extent when we remember that the Queen and her Court, the patrons of literature and the Drama, were entirely hostile to the Puritans. Thus for men of letters to have shewn too much sympathy with the Puritans, or to have expressed Puritan ideals too openly in their works, would have been to have lost the favour, and incurred the censure of the Court.

Nevertheless it seems to us that even Shakespeare was not uninfluenced by the moral idealism of the Puritans.

In the "Twelfth Night" there is a conversation between Maria and Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek about the steward, Malvolio. The Steward has said to Toby: "My lady bade me tell you, that, though she harbours you as her kinsman, she's nothing allied to your disorders. If you can separate yourself and your misdemeahours, you are welcome to the house; if not, an it would please you to take leave of her, she is very willing to bid you farewell". Toby bids Maria "tell us something of him" (Malvolio), and she replies, "Sometimes he is a kind of Puritan", but she goes on, "The devil a Puritan that he is, or anything constantly, but a time-pleaser; an affectioned ass, that cons state without book and utters it by great swarths; the best persuaded of himself, so crammed, as he thinks, with excellencies, that it is his ground of faith that all that look on him love him".<sup>1</sup>

From the latter part of Maria's explanation of Malvolio's character, we might imagine that Shakespeare was denouncing the Puritans as hypocritical precisians, as was commonly done; but such an idea seems excluded by Maria's impatient words: "The devil a Puritan that he is, or anything constantly, but a time-pleaser". And Shakespeare would seem from this passage to dissociate Puritanism from mere cant and hypocrisy, and to associate it with

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1: "Twelfth Night", Act II. Scene 3.

genuine moral excellence. And we venture to think that, while this greatest of dramatists never preaches nor draws a moral in his plays, nevertheless the fact that there is always a moral to be drawn by the intelligent reader, is evidence of the moral interest which Shakespeare took in life and character. His tragedies in particular are concerned with the inevitable consequences of certain lines of conduct. How far was this due, we wonder, to the Puritan atmosphere in which he was brought up in his parent's home?

Mr E. I. Fripp, a trustee of Shakespeare's birth-place, has brought to light in a recent article<sup>1</sup> the fact that John Shakespeare, the father of the poet and dramatist, was a sturdy Puritan. He was a Constable of Stratford when Elizabeth came to the throne and, "as acting-Chamberlain, supervised the Protestantising of the (Guild Chapel) which was ruthless". But he seems to have left the Anglican party and taken the side of Leicester, Warwick and Cartwright in the Puritan struggle against the Queen and Bishops round about the year 1575.

Shakespeare, however, would not have approved of the iconoclastic methods of the Puritans which moved them after the Civil War to strip the Cathedrals of images and organs

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1: Vide ~~Milbert~~ Journal, April 1928. "The Religion of Shakespeare's Father". by E. I. Fripp.

and almost every semblance of beauty and refinement. Perhaps he had seen the devastation wrought in the Guild Chapel at Stratford by Anglicans in the early days of Elizabeth, and his disapproval of this kind of vandalism is put into the mouth of Edward IV in the Play "Richard III"

"But when your carters or your waiting vassals  
Have done a drunken slaughter, and defaced  
The precious image of our dear Redeemer...."<sup>1</sup>

Apart from these references however there is nothing to suggest that Shakespeare was influenced by Puritanism; and on the whole he follows the humanist tradition, depicting life in all its phases from the human side.

The influence of Puritanism however is more evident in the works of his contemporary, Edmund Spenser. He had been a student at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, when Thomas Cartwright was professor of Divinity at that college, and when Cambridge was actively in sympathy with the Puritan cause. In such an atmosphere in the formative years of his life, it is not surprising that he carried away something of the Puritan outlook. But Spenser, as can be readily seen from his literary works, was not a Puritan in the sense in which either Milton or Bunyan were Puritans.

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1. Richard III. Act II. Scene 1. line 122 f.

With him as with Shakespeare the humanist tradition was exceedingly powerful in its grip upon him. His rich and brilliant imagery, so sensuous in its appeal, is indeed of the very essence of the Classical French and Italian Schools. And it is chiefly in the ideas which the reader himself has to glean of the meaning, say, of the "Shepherds Calender" or the "Faerie Queene", that Spenser's Puritanism is seen. Mr M. B. Yeates is of the opinion that too much Puritanism has been imported into Spenser's works by those who would claim him as a Puritan. "Spenser", he says, "had indeed many Puritan thoughts. It has been recorded that he cut his hair short and half regretted his hymns to Love and Beauty. But he has himself told us that the many-headed beast overthrown and bound by Calidor, Knight of Courtesy, was Puritanism itself. Puritanism, its zeal and its narrowness, and the angry suspicion that it had in common with all movements of the ill-educated, seemed no other to him than a slanderer of all fine things".<sup>1</sup>

We can readily believe what Mr Yeates says with regard to Spenser, and of the poet's own idea of the horrible dragon in the 'Faerie Queene'. But this does not mean that Spenser was not a Puritan, but merely indicates his position among the Puritans. Not all Puritans, as we

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1: "Poems of Spenser". The Golden Poets series.  
(Ed. Oliphant Smeaton). Introduction. p. xxvi.

have seen, were alike. Milton, as we shall see later, was of a very different cast of mind to Bunyan, and Cartwright and Robert Browne could scarcely be placed on the same platform. And we can't imagine that Spenser would be enamoured, for instance, of the thorough-going cleansing of the Church of all its ritual of ceremony and beauty of vestments which the Presbyterians demanded. In this revolt against beauty Spenser could not have shared.

What then was Spenser's position, or what was it that he derived from Puritanism? It seems to us that the supreme contribution of Puritanism to this poet may be summed up in the object he had in view in writing the "Faerie Queene". This object was: "To fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline".<sup>1</sup> In other words Spenser had become enamoured of that virtuous life which, as we have claimed in an earlier section, was the final object of the Puritans' endeavour to set up what they considered to be a more scriptural polity than the episcopal. And it would appear, both from the "Shepherds Calender" and the "Faerie Queene" that he sympathised with this Puritan earnestness, and disapproved of the indifference of those Anglican clergy who had not this zeal, but were

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1: Introductory letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, accompanying the "Faerie Queene".

content to allow such conditions as were revealed for example in the Puritan census of 1586 to continue.<sup>1</sup>

In the "Shepherds Calender" for instance, the poet would seem to be in absolute sympathy with the contentions of the Admonitionists with regard to the Bishops of the Anglican Church, who lived as Lords and neglected the flock. In the Eclogue for "Februarie" Thenot relates to Cuddie the legend of the withered oak-tree and the jealous briar. The briar complains:

"Ah, my soveraigne! Lord of creatures all.  
Thou placer of plants both humble and tall,  
Was not I planted of thine owne hand  
To be the primrose of all thy land;  
With flowring blossomes to furnish the prime,  
And scarlot berries in Sommer tyme?  
How falls it then that this faded Oake,  
Whose bodie is sere, whose braunches broke,  
Whose naked Armes stretch unto the fyre,  
Unto such tyrranie doth aspire;  
Hindering with his shade my lovely light,  
And robbing me of the swete sonnes sight?"<sup>2</sup>

It would seem that the briar is the protestant Anglican Church; the Oak the Roman Church: the sovereign Elizabeth. After the briar's complaining the oak is cut down, but all is not well with the briar then.

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1: Vide Supra, p.115.

2: Spensers Works, R. Morris. (Globe Edition)  
pp. 449-450.



"Now stands the Brere like a lord alone,  
 Puffed up with pryde and vaine pleasaunce;  
 But all this glee had no continuaunce:  
 For eftsones Winter gan to approche,  
 The blustering Borcas did encroche.  
 And beate upon the solitarie Brere;  
 For nowe no succoure was seene him nere....."

And according to Thenot the Briar fell:

"Such was thend of this Ambitious brere  
 For scorning eld- "1

Now it might seem that Spenser disapproved of the over-throwing of the Roman Church, but from a later Eclogue it would appear rather that he merely disapproved of an English Church that would be like Rome in its pomp and pride. In the Eclogue for 'Maye' for instance, Piers the shepherd complains to Palinode of shepherds (pastors or Bishops) who

"..... little regarden their charge,  
 While they, letting their sheepe runne at large,  
 Passen their time, that should be sparely spent,  
 In lustihede and wanton meryment.  
 Thilke same bene shepeheardes for the Devil's stedde,  
 That playen while their flockes be unfedde;  
 Well is it seene theyr sheepe bene not their owne,  
 That letten them runne at randon alone:  
 But they bene hyred for little pay  
 Of other, that caren as little as they  
 What fallen the flocke, so they han the fleece  
 And get all the gayne, paying but a peece".<sup>2</sup>

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1: Spensers Works, Ibid. p.450.

2: Ibid. p. 459.

And Spenser has a great deal more to say on the same subject which seems conclusively to manifest his disapproval of the Anglican Bishops' practices, and places him in this respect on the side of the divinity professor of his own college at Cambridge.

"The time was once, and may againe retorne,  
(For ought may happen, that hath bene beforne)  
When shepheards had none inheritance  
Ne of land, nor fee in sufferance.  
But what might arise of the bare sheepe....."

"But tract of time, and long prosperitie,  
That nource of vice, this of insolencie,  
Lulled the shepheards in such securitie,  
That not content with loyall obeysaunce  
Some gan to gape for greedie governaunce,  
And match them selfe with mighty potentates,  
Lovers of Lordship, and troublers of states".

And in the Eclogue for "Julye" in which he commends and gives examples of "good shepheardes", he writes:

"Such one he was .....  
.....  
That whilome was the first shepheard  
And lived with little gayne:  
And meeke he was, as meeke mought be,  
Simple as simple sheepe;  
Humble, and like in eche degree  
The flocke which he did keepe".

And after extolling the chief shepherd (Christ) he holds up with approval the disciples and Moses, of whom he says:

".....all these were lowe and lief,  
And loved their flocks to feede;  
They never stroven to be chiefe  
And Simple was theyr werde....."1

And these he contrasts with the Roman bishops - possibly the  
Anglicans are meant - of whom he says;

"Theyr sheepe han crustes, and they the bread;  
The corne is theyrs, let others thresh,  
Their handes they may not file.  
They han great stores and thriftye stockes,  
Great freendes and feeble foes:  
What neede hem caren for their flocks  
Theyr boyes can looke to those....."2

In the Eclogue for September the same matter is dwelt  
upon from the point of view of the sheep who cannot find  
good pasturage.

"The shepheards there robben one another  
And layen baytes to beguile her brother;  
Or they will buy his sheepe out of the cote,  
Or they will carven the shepheards throte.  
The shepheardes swayne you cannot wel ken,  
But it be by his pryde, from other men:  
I thought the soyle would have made me rich.  
But nowe I note it is nothing sich;  
For eyther the shepeheards bene ydle und still,  
Or they bene false, and full of covetise,  
And casten to compasse many wrong emprise:  
But the more bene fraight with fraud and spight,  
Ne in good nor goodnes taken delight.  
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1: Ibid. p. 467  
2: Ibid. p. 468

Badde is the best;.....  
 Their ill haviour garres men missay  
 Both of their doctrine, and of theyr faye.  
 They sayne the world is much war then it wont,  
 All for her shepheards bene beastly and blont.  
 .....  
 .....  
 Like as the shepheards, like bene her sheepe,  
 .....  
 They wander at wil and stay at pleasure....."1

In the "Faerie Queene", Spenser's religious sympathies are not less evident than in the "Shepheards Calender". The virtues with which he deals in the fine books of this long but entrancing allegory - holiness, temperance, chastity, friendship and justice - are Catholic as well as Protestant virtues. But the poet's purpose is inescapable. The Knights who are out for the defence of the respective virtues meet temptations which must be guarded against, otherwise disaster and disillusionment follow. In Book I, for instance, the Red Cross Knight who sets out with Una, the lady of his love, on an enterprise to free the Kingdom of Una's parents from a great dragon, gets entangled with Fidessa, who robs him of his love for Una, whom he leaves for Fidessa for a time. Spenser, it would seem, desired to portray Una as the highest form of Beauty and the symbol of Christian Truth. The Knight is the symbol of the Bishops of the Church of England, out for the defence of Christian truth.

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1: Ibid. pp. 473-474. (Various).

Fidessa is Roman Christianity which claims to be the faith. Unfortunately the Knight becomes so charmed by Fidessa that he loses Una. He has got seated on a "wanton pelfry" provided by Fidessa. But Una has the Lion with her, the valiant spirit of truth, while Fidessa is later seen to be Duesessa - doubleness or falsehood - in disguise.

"Thensforth I tooke Duesessa for my Dame,  
And in the witch unweeting joyd long time,  
He ever wist but that she was the same:  
Till on a day . . . . .  
I chaunst to see her in her proper hew,  
Bathing her selfe in origane and thyme:  
A filthy foule old woman I did vew,  
That ever to have toucht her I did deadly rew".<sup>1</sup>

There seems little doubt that Spenser is here registering his protest against the Romanist tendencies of Anglicanism. Is it too much to say that the Knight on the "wanton pelfry" is Spenser's figure of speech for the Bishops of his day who in their pomp and pride rode the high-horse and wielded an authority over the tender consciences of men that was without understanding or feeling, an authority derived from position and bolstered up by pride and prejudice? At all events Spenser beholds the Bishops (the Red Cross Knight) deluded but fascinated by Rome (Duesessa) while true Christianity (Una)

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1: "Faerie Queene", Bk. I. Canto II. Verse XL.  
Spenser's Works, Ibid. p.21

with her guardian lion is forsaken. Did the poet mean to suggest that Puritanism was the lion - the guardian or defender of Christian truth? It does seem to us that this is what he meant, and that he saw in Puritanism some of the tendencies of which movement he might not approve - that moral earnestness which is the sine qua non of true religion.

Apart from this moral earnestness we find little or nothing in Spenser suggestive of Puritan influence. As we have said he is still in the grip of the Humanist tradition, and manifests no qualms about teaching his moral truths in allegories that abound with giants, fairies and heathen divinities, and draped in sensuous and even sensual imagery, As Dowden says: "While Spenser was essentially a man of the Reformation, in sympathy - at least in his earlier years - rather with the Puritan than with the High Anglican or Catholic tendency of the English Church, he was also essentially a man of the Renaissance. Prophets and evangelists hold hands in his teaching with Aristotle and Plato, and the group of masters, sacred and profane, is encircled by a bright arabesque of Italian ornament".<sup>1</sup>

Spenser was a courtly poet. There is no suggestion whatever in his works that the Queen's attitude to Puritanism delayed the coming of that moral reformation which the Puritans

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1: Dowden, "Puritan and Anglican", p. 272.

desired, and of which Spenser sings. On the other hand "Gloriana" in the "Faerie Queene" is the glory of God and at the same time the Queen. The Red Cross Knight is the Knight of Holiness and also the patron saint of England. "Duesssa" is falsehood, and it is thought Mary, Queen of Scots, the enemy of Elizabeth. "Spenser's Knights", says Dowden, ".....form a goodly fellowship under their great Queen and Empress. A strain of lofty patriotism animates them to high achievement. The first to start forth in defence of injured Truth is no other than Saint George, the patron of our land".<sup>1</sup>

Nor was Spenser even touched by the Puritan notion that pleasure in itself is wrong, or that to save ones soul, man must shun the world and its simple joys and ravishing beauties. In this respect he is poles apart from Bunyan, whose pilgrim seeks the wicket gate and the narrow way to life. "Bunyan's men", says Yeates, "would do right that they might come some day to the Delectable Mountain, and not at all that they might live happily in a world whose beauty was but an entanglement about their feet. Religion had denied the sacredness of an Earth that commerce was about to corrupt and ravish, but when Spenser lived the earth had still its sheltering sacredness. His religion.....

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1: Ibid. p. 273.

cherished the beauty of the soul and the beauty of the body with, as it seemed, an equal affection. He would have had men live well, not merely that they might win eternal happiness but that they might live splendidly among men and be celebrated in many songs. How could one live well if one had not the joy of the Creator and of the giver of gifts?"<sup>1</sup>

Spenser's link with the Humanists is well seen in his apotheosis of love in the 'Hymne in Honour of Love'. There is little suggestion in this poem of a Puritan strain in his nature. He is chiefly a poet of the Renaissance here:

Come, then, O come, thou mightie God of Love,  
Out of thy silver bowres and secret blisse,  
Where thou doest sit in Venus lap above  
Bathing thy wings in her ambrosiall kisse.  
That sweeter farre then any Nectar is;

. . . . .

Great God of Might, that reignest in the mynd,  
And all the bodie to thy hest doest frame  
Victor of Gods, subduer of mankynd,  
That doest the Lions and fell Tigers tame,

Who can expresse the glorie of thy might? . . .

Thereby they all do live, and moved are . . .  
To multiply the likenesse of their kynd,  
Whilest they seeke onely, without further care,  
To quench the flame which they in burning fynd;

For sure of all that in this mortall frame . . .  
Contained is, nought more divine doth seeme,  
Or that resembleth more th' immortal flame  
Of heavenly light, then Beauties glorious beame.

. . . . .

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1: "Spenser's Poems" - "Golden Poets" series. (Ed. O. Smeaton)  
Introduction. pp. xxiv-xxv.



There thou them placest in a Paradize  
 Of all delight and joyous happie rest,  
 Where they doe feede on Nectar heavenly-wize,  
 With Hercules and Hebe, and the rest  
 Of Venus dearlings, through her bountie blest;  
 And lie like Gods in yvorie beds arayd  
 With rose and lillies over them displayd.  
 There with thy daughter Pleasure they doe play  
 Their hurtless sports, without rebuke or blame,  
 And in her snowy bosome boldly lay  
 Their quiet heads, devoyd of guilty shame,  
 After full joyance of their gentle game;  
 Then her they crowne their Goddesse and their Queene,  
 And decke with floures thy altars well besee<sup>1</sup>

Spenser's sensuous and sensual glorification of physical love is however modified somewhat in this poem by the following stanzas. After condemning mere physical desire which is not love - "Such fancies feeble no love, but loose desyre" - he writes:

"For love is Lord of truth and loialtie,  
 Lifting himselfe out of the lowly dust  
 On golden plumes up to the purest skie.  
 Above the reach of loathly sinfull lust,  
 Whose base affect through cowardly distrust  
 Of his weake wings dare not to heaven fly,  
 But like a mold warpe in the earth doth ly.

His dunghill thoughts, which do themselves enure  
 To dirtie drosse, no higher dare aspyre,  
 Ne can his feeble earthly eyes endure  
 The flaming light of that celestiall fyre  
 Which kindleth love in generous desyre  
 And makes him mount above the native might  
 Of heaue earth, up to the heavens hight.

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1: The Works of Spenser, R. Morris (Globe Edition)  
 pp. 592-595.

Such is the powre of that sweet passion,  
That it all sordid basenesse doth expell....."<sup>1</sup>

Spenser afterwards regretted having written on love in the former strain, and put forth as a corrective "An Hymne of Heavenly Love"<sup>2</sup>. In the second stanza of this poem he writes:

"Many lewd layes (ah! woe is me the more!)  
In praise of that mad fit which fooles call love,  
I have in th' heat of youth made heretofore,  
That in light wits did loose affection move;  
But all those follies now I do reprove,  
And turned have the tenor of my string,  
The heavenly prayeses of true love to sing".

And in the dedicatory letter to the Countesse of Cumberland and the Countesse of Warwicke which accompanied the poems<sup>3</sup>, he says; "Having in the greener times of my youth, composed these former two Hymnes in the praise of Love and Beautie, and finding that the same two much pleased those of like age and disposition, which being too vehemently caried with that kind of affection, do rather sucke out poyson to their strong passion, than hony to their honest delight. I was moved by the one of you two most excellent ladies, to call in the same....."<sup>4</sup>

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1: The Works of Spenser. Ibid. p. 594.

2: Ibid. pp. 599-602.

3: The four poems "Hymne in Honour of Love", "Hymne in honour of Beautie", "Of Heavenly Love" and of "Heavenly Beautie"

4: Ibid. p. 592.

In the poem on "Heavenly Love", Spenser does not rise to the same heights of inspired utterance as in the poem "In Honour of Love". One feels that the sentiment is forced in the former and flows spontaneously in the latter. And one can understand this, since it was possibly undertaken at the request of the Countess of Warwick, a Puritan with Presbyterian tendencies. The poem itself, like "Paradise Lost", deals with the love of God, whose love made the Angels, who afterwards rebelled and were cast out of heaven; and whose love then made men, who also rebelled, but were saved by that love that came to earth in Jesus Christ. And the poet calls upon men to be grateful and manifest their gratitude for such a love.

"He downe descended.....  
 ..... in fleshes fraile attyre,  
 That He for him might pay sinnes deadly hyre,  
 And him restore unto that happie state  
 In which he stood before his haplesse fate.  
 .....

With all thy hart, with all thy soule and mind,  
 Thou must him love, and his beheasts embrace;  
 All other loves, with which the world doth blind  
 Weake fancies, and stirre up affections base,  
 Thou must renounce and utterly displace.  
 And give thy self unto him full and free,<sup>1</sup>  
 That full and freely gave him selfe to thee.

Spenser's Puritanism, from the sentiment of this poem,

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1: Ibid. pp. 601, 602.

is more of the Anglican than of the Presbyterian kind. He draws lessons, like the Humanist that he was, from the life of Christ rather than from the dogmas of Paul as interpreted by the Puritans; and he is more of a Universalist than an upholder of the Puritan doctrine of Predestination. And his ideas of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper are verging on Romanism:

"And last, the food of life, which now we have,  
Even he him selfe, in his deare sacrament,  
To feede our hungry soules, unto us lent".<sup>1</sup>

Spenser we feel was more in sympathy with Humanism than with Puritanism. All that the latter did for him was to tone down somewhat the cruder and more sensual views of human experience by giving him a deep sense of the essential worth of beauty that was married to goodness and truth.

Roughly half a century goes by before we come to another poet on whom the influence of Puritanism had any marked effect. Spenser was dead (1599) before John Milton was born - (1608-1674).

The religious influences in which Milton grew up were Puritan. His father he writes, "was distinguished by the undeviating integrity of his life"; and his mother "by the

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1: Ibid. p. 601.

esteem in which she was held, and the alms which she bestowed"<sup>1</sup>  
 His private tutor, the Rev. Thomas Young, took a leading part  
 in later years in drawing up the Puritan reply<sup>2</sup> to Bishop  
 Hall's "Episcopacy by Divine Right Asserted"; and the  
 traditions of Cambridge where Milton spent seven years were  
 Puritan too. When he went to the University his intention  
 was to enter the Church<sup>3</sup>. It would seem however that  
 neither the creeds to be signed nor the oaths to be taken  
 prevented him from proceeding with this intention, but a  
 growing interest in literature on the one hand, and the  
 increasing difficulties which confronted a Puritan clergyman  
 under Laud's policy on the other<sup>4</sup>. Here are Milton's own  
 words; ".....The Church, to whose service, by the inten-  
 tions of my parents and friends, I was destined of a child,  
 and in mine own resolutions; till coming to some maturity  
 of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded in the  
 church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave,

- 1: Defensio Secunda (1654) Prose Works, (Ed. Bohm) Vol.I.  
p. 254.
- 2: The Treatise was signed "Smectymnus" i.e. the initials  
of the Contributors. The T.Y. = Thomas Young.
- 3: Vide Masson, "Life of John Milton", Vol. I. p. 289.
- 4: Vide Masson, "Life of John Milton", pp. 292-386.  
Masson gives a good outline of the  
position.

and take an oath withal, which, unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure, or split his faith, I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing".<sup>1</sup>

Milton's education however had not been in any narrow sense Puritan. "My father", he writes, "destined me from a child to the pursuits of literature; and my appetite for knowledge was so voracious, that from twelve years of age, I hardly ever left my studies, or went to bed before midnight. This primarily led to my loss of sight. My eyes were naturally weak, and I was subject to frequent headaches; which, however, could not chill the ardour of my curiosity, or retard the progress of my improvement. My father had me daily instructed in the Grammar School and by other masters at home....."<sup>2</sup>. And his progress in the Latin tongue and in the knowledge of Classical poets is seen in his Latin Elegy<sup>3</sup> to Thomas Young, his tutor, written in his eighteenth year. Here is a sample, translated into English, of his classical references: "First, under his (T. Young's) guidance, I

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- 1: "The Reason of Church Government" (1641) Milton's Prose Works. (Ed. Bohn) Vol. II. p. 482  
 2: "Defensio Secunda", Milton's Prose Works. Vol. I. p. 254.  
 3: Poetical Works, Latin Elegies IV.

explored the recesses of the Muses, and beheld the sacred green spots of the cleft summit of Parnassus, and quaffed the Pierian cups, and, Clio favouring me, thrice sprinkled my joyful mouth with Castalian wine".

At Cambridge Milton continued his studies in Classics and philosophy for seven years, although when he went there, as he says, "I had acquired a proficiency in various languages".<sup>1</sup> And for five years after his University days were over, "on my father's estate (Horton in Buckinghamshire).....I enjoyed an interval of uninterrupted leisure, which I entirely devoted to the perusal of the Greek and Latin classics:..... or of learning something new in mathematics or in music, in which I at that time found a source of pleasure and amusement".<sup>2</sup> While at Horton he wrote several poems, the best being L'Allegro, Il Penseroso and Comus - a masque which was played at Ludlow Castle in 1634. And it was here that Milton finally decided to devote his life to the Muse. His father was not happy about his son's decision, and Milton has given us his defence or Apology for this proposed step in his Latin Poem 'Ad Patrem'. From Horton he went on his grand tour<sup>3</sup> to Italy in 1638, visiting France on the way, and was absent until the struggle between Charles I and the Long Parliament moved him to come

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1: "Defensio Secunda" (Ed. Bohn) Vol. I. p. 254.

2: Ibid. p.255

3: Ibid. p. 255 f

home. "The melancholy intelligence which I received of the Civil Commotions in England", he wrote, "made me alter my purpose; for I thought it base to be travelling for amusement abroad while my fellow-citizens were fighting at home for liberty".<sup>1</sup>

From this time "liberty" becomes the dominating passion with Milton, and it seems to us that this passion was largely, if not altogether, the contribution which Puritanism made to the poet. As Spenser was moved by a vision of moral beauty, so Milton was moved by a vision of equal, or of even greater beauty, the vision of liberty which was to be attained along the path of righteousness and truth. Visions of a new earth were awakened in him by the controversy upon Episcopal government which began with the meeting of the Long Parliament. "I saw", he wrote, "that a way was opened for the establishment of real liberty; that the foundation was laying for the deliverance of man from the yoke of slavery and superstition; that the principles of religion, which were the first object of our care, would exert a salutary influence on the manners and constitution of the republic; and as I had from my youth studied the distinctions between religious and civil rights, I perceived that if I ever wished to be of use, I ought at least not to be wanting to my country, to the Church and to so

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1: Ibid. p. 256.



many of my fellow-christians in a crisis of so much danger; I therefore determined to relinquish the other pursuits in which I was engaged, and to transfer the whole force of my talents and my industry to this one important object".<sup>1</sup>

Milton's prose writings which are much more bulky than his poetical works, and which can scarcely be regarded as literature in the true sense of the word, since they were either treatises on subjects which largely concerned the thought of the times, or ad hoc defences of policy, etc. are nevertheless of importance to a real understanding of Milton's conception of liberty. Had not the Civil War and the distressing period of the Commonwealth and Protectorate engrossed Milton's thoughts and called forth these numerous prose works, there is no doubt that he would have further enriched our literature by his poetic genius. He would, of course, have been a different Milton from the one we know, and his great epic would have immortalised other heroes. Ere the Civil War called him from Italy he had decided to write an Epic after the manner of Homer or Virgil, in which the glories of England should be sung. "I began thus far to assent", he writes, "..... that.....I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die.....to be an interpreter and relater

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1: "Defensio Secunda", Ibid. pp. 257-258.

of the best and sagest things among mine own citizens throughout this island in the mother dialect. That what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old did for their country, I.....might do for mine".<sup>1</sup>

Not only did the Civil Commotions delay the poet's production of this intended Epic, but they greatly modified his theme. For about twenty years his pen, which would under other circumstances have been employed in the service of the Muse, was devoted to the immediate tasks of civil and religious liberty.

Before speaking about Milton's conception of liberty as seen in his many writings in prose and verse, we should like to say that it seems to us that, while the struggle of the Puritans with Charles on account of his autocratic policy in Church and State, was the prime cause of the poet's enthusiastic championing of liberty, nevertheless his conception of liberty was wider than that held by most of the Puritans. Milton was a Puritan and owed much to the Puritan movement. But he was more than a Puritan in that many of the Puritan ideas of liberty were intolerable to him. And we feel that perhaps it was the extensive range of his learning which gave to him this wider outlook and truer understanding of liberty,

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1: "The Reason of Church Government" (Ed. Bohm) Vol.II.  
pp. 477-478.

and separated him from the main current of Puritanism. Like Spenser Milton was a humanist as well as a Puritan: and his more rational outlook on life liberated him from many of the prejudices of Puritanism. Reason and not prejudice nor authority was his guiding star. But it was reason grounded on faith in the guidance of the spirit of Truth.

It is impossible to speak at any length in this treatise on the prose-writings of Milton, but it may be interesting to look at some of his ideas and notice how in some things he goes beyond his contemporaries.

With reference to Kings and Magistrates, he writes that their "power.....is nothing else but what is only derivative, transferred and committed to them in trust from the people to the common good of them all, in whom the power yet remains fundamentally, and cannot be taken from them, without a violation of their natural birthright."<sup>1</sup> This was Milton's "Social Contract" theory, and it is the thesis of this tract and also underlies his two tracts on the "Defence of the people of England" and on "Eikonoklastes". On the ground that Charles had broken faith with the people and sinned against this contract, he justified his execution. And holding this theory he had no sympathy with the upholders of

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1: "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates" (Ed. Bohn) Vol.II.  
p.11

the Divine Right of Kings. "You say that all Kings are of God, and that therefore the people ought not to resist them, be they never such tyrants. I answer you, the convention of the people, their votes, their acts, are likewise of God.....and consequently, according to your argument..... princes ought not to resist the people. For as certain as it is, that Kings are of God.....so certain it is, that free assemblies of the body of the people are of God, and that naturally affords the same argument for their right of restraining princes....."<sup>1</sup>

In this matter Milton undoubtedly interpreted the mind of the Puritans as he did also in his attack on Episcopacy. Very much in sympathy with the Puritan position is his statement on vestments; "he that will clothe the gospel now, intimates plainly that the gospel is naked, uncomely.... ...What new decency can then be added by your spinstry? Ye think by these gaudy glisterings to stir up the devotion of the rude multitude; ye think so, because ye forsake the heavenly teaching of St Paul for the hellish sophistry of papism".<sup>2</sup> And of the pomp and power of Bishops, he says, "When she (the Church) thinks to credit and better her spiritual efficacy, and to win herself respect and dread by strutting in

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1: "A Defence of the People of England". (Ed. Bohn) Vol.I. p.94

2: Reasons of Church Government urged against Prelaty" (Bohn) Vol.II. p.485.

the false vizard of worldly authority, it is evident that God is not there, but that her apostolic virtue is departed from her,..... But .....so long as the church, in true imitation of Christ, can be content to ride upon an ass, carrying herself and her government along in a mean and simple guise, she may be, as he is, a lion of the tribe of Judah, and in her humility all men with loud hosannas will confess her greatness. But when..... she thinks to make herself bigger and more considerable, as she sits upon the lion she changes into an ass, and instead of hosannas every man pelts her with stones and dirt."<sup>1</sup>

Milton's ideal for the church he has thus expressed: "I shall.....not cease to hope.....that England shortly is to belong, neither to see patriarchal nor see prelatical, but to the faithful feeding and disciplining of that ministerial order, which the blessed Apostles constituted throughout the Churches; and this.....can be no other than that of Presbyters and deacons.....Let others...dread and shun the scriptures for their darkness; I shall wish I may deserve to be reckoned among those who admire and dwell upon them for their clearness."<sup>2</sup>

Milton however was disappointed with the Presbyterians on account of their autocratic attitude in religion,

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1: Ibid. p. 489.

2: Ibid. pp. 440-441.

and their treaty with the King which threatened to restore the monarchy and set up an intolerant Presbyterianism. And in his tract on "The Ready way to Establish a Free Commonwealth", he sets forth his ideas of how to attain liberty. In place of a king he would have a Grand Council composed of the "ablest knights and burgesses", elected by "a standing council in each city and great town". And on this grand council should rest the power of government, but the council shall not have "power to endanger our liberty" since it was to be ultimately responsible to those who elected it.<sup>1</sup>

In religion he would have a reformation according to "evangelic rules", and "not to ecclesiastical canons, though never so ancient, so ratified and established in the land by statutes which for the most part are mere positive laws, neither natural nor moral:....."<sup>2</sup> Here he was speaking against the upholders of presbytery and not of episcopacy - those who had been turned out of the House by Colonel Pride. And he goes on to claim, ".....liberty of conscience, which above all other things ought to be to all men dearest and most precious, no government more inclinable not to favour only, but to protect, than a free commonwealth;

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1: The Present means and brief delineation of A Free Commonwealth", (Bohn) Vol.II. p. 107.

2: The Ready Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth. (Bohn) Vol. II. p.111

as being most magnanimous, most fearless, and confident of its own fair proceedings".<sup>1</sup>

As to civil rights Milton would have the "advancements of every person according to his merit".<sup>2</sup> And that men might have the opportunity of becoming more qualified for the duties of citizenship, he contends that "They should have.....schools and Academies.....wherein their children may be bred up in their own sight to all learning and noble education; not in grammar only but in all liberal arts and exercises. This would soon spread much more knowledge and civility, yea, religion through all parts of the land,.....would soon make the whole nation more industrious, more ingenious at home, more potent, more honourable abroad".<sup>3</sup>

At a later date Milton returns to the subject of Education and outlines at some length an almost impossible scheme - impossible because of its tremendous syllabus and not because of its ideals which are exceedingly fine. Dowden remarks, that "in truth no more majestic ideal of education is elsewhere to be found; it is the ideal of the christianised Renaissance, of Hebraism and Hellenism brought into harmony".<sup>4</sup> Milton would have men not to be

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- 1: The Ready Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth (Bohn)  
Vol. II. p. 133.  
2: Ibid. p. 135.  
3: Ibid. p. 136.  
4: "Puritan and Anglican". p. 153.

time-servers and place-seekers, but to delight to be of service to the common good. As it is, "some (are) allured to the trade of law, grounding their purposes not on the prudent and heavenly contemplation of justice and equity, which was never taught them, but on the promising and pleasing thoughts of litigious terms, fat contentions, and flowing fees; others betake them to state affairs, with souls so unprincipled in virtue and true generous breeding that flattery and court-shifts and tyrannous aphorisms appear to them the highest points of wisdom....."<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of Milton's scheme of Education was to correct this. He says, "I call.....a complete and generous education, that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously, all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war".<sup>2</sup> His proposals for the management of the people's sports and pastimes, which we have already mentioned,<sup>3</sup> were also put forth with the same motive.

And Milton shews himself beyond his age in the matter of Divorce and the Freedom of the Press.

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1: "On education". (Bohn) Vol.III. p. 466.

2: Ibid. p. 467.

3: Vide supra.p.p.190- "The Reason of Church Government"  
191 (Bohn) Vol.II. p. 480.



With regard to the former he contends that the sacramental sanctity of marriage is a clerical invention, and that incompatibility of character or temperament is a sufficient ground of divorce: "That indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindering, and ever likely to hinder the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace; is a greater reason of divorce than natural frigidity....."<sup>1</sup>

Whether Milton would have taken up this attitude if his marriage with Mary Powell - a girl of seventeen and the daughter of a royalist - had been a happy one, is problematic. His shock and disillusionment when she left him, when the honeymoon was scarcely over, were undoubtedly the cause of this tract. But he never went back upon his contentions, though Mary came back to him, and they would seem to have been tolerably happy.

With regard to the prohibition of publishing without licence, Milton's chief objection was that it would "be primely to the discouragement of all learning, and stop the truth, not only by disexercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindering and cropping the discovery that might be yet further made, both in religious and civil wisdom."<sup>2</sup> And he proceeds; "books are not

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1: "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce". (Bohn)  
Vol.III. p. 185.

2: "Areopagitica". (Bohn) Vol. II. p.55

absolutely dead things but do contain a progeny of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are;.....as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye.....a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life".<sup>1</sup>

Milton would not have prohibited the publication of any books - even evil books were of value to him. "What wisdom", he says, "can there be to choose, what continence to forbear, without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat".<sup>2</sup>

His ideal was the Apostolic maxim: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good".<sup>3</sup>

So much then, though much more might be said, for Milton's ideas of Liberty in his prose works. That he

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1: Ibid. p. 55  
 2: Ibid. p. 68  
 3: Ibid. p. 65

expressed the Puritan mind with regard to freedom in state and church is evident, but it was the freedom of the Independent rather than the Presbyterian position for which he contended. A republic as under Cromwell, was his ideal for the State; and religion as allowed by Cromwell his ideal in the Church. But Milton was not satisfied by the Cromwellian State and Church. At the beginning of Cromwell's regime, Milton believed the golden-age was dawning. He writes: "While You, O Cromwell, are left among us, he hardly shews a proper confidence in the Supreme, who distrusts the security of England:.....We all willingly yield the palm of sovereignty to your unrivalled ability and virtue,..... the best and wisest of men".<sup>1</sup> But Cromwell as Lord Protector belied Milton's hopes of the republic, and Cromwell's endowment of the Church offended Milton, and the Protector's censorship of the Press was contrary to the freedom-loving mind of the poet. Milton's Puritanism permitted of a freedom that was shared by few if any of the leading Puritans of his day.

When we turn to Milton's poetry we also find that his Puritanism has not confined his mind into too narrow grooves. Like Spenser he is a humanist as well as a Puritan, with merely a larger admixture of Puritanism in his humanism.

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1: "The Second Defence of the People of England" (Bohn)  
Vol. I. pp. 287-288.

Both these characteristics may be well seen in "Comus", written in his youth; and in "Paradise Lost", the great epic of his mature years.

Considering the Puritan attitude to stage-plays it surely argues a wider and more humanistic mind in young Milton that he should write "Comus" to be acted at Ludlow Castle. And the Masque itself, while it has a lofty object in view, viz, the praise of chastity.

"To triumph in victorious dance  
O'er sensual folly, and intemperance - "

Nevertheless in setting forth this lesson Milton draws upon Classical mythology, makes use of witches' potions, and depicts scenes such as we can imagine the Puritan publication censor would have suppressed - scenes of sensuous beauty and sensual suggestiveness.

"Meanwhile welcome Joy and Feast  
Midnight Shout and Revelry,  
Tipsy Dance and Jollity.  
Braid your locks with rosy twine,  
Dropping odours, dropping wine.  
Rigour now is gone to bed,  
And Advice with scrupulous head,  
Strict Age, and sour Severity  
With their grave saws in slumber lie".

So sings Comus as night draws on, and in this mood he meets a maiden who has got separated from her two brothers, and

under pretence of leading her to safety conducts her to his  
stately palace and tempts her with impure intentions to drink  
his charmed potion.

"Why are you vext, Lady? Why do you frown?  
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates  
Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures  
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts.  
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns  
Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season".  
. . . . .

"Why should you be so cruel to yourself,  
And to those dainty limbs which Nature lent  
For gentle usage, and soft delicacy?"  
. . . . .

"List, Lady, be not coy, and be not cozened  
With that same vaunted name Virginity.  
Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,  
But must be current, and the good thereof  
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,  
Unsavoury in th' enjoyment of itself;  
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose  
It withers on the stalk with languished head".

And Comus pressing her further proceeds:

"I must dissemble,  
And try her yet more strongly. Come, no more,  
This is mere moral babble, and direct  
Against the canon-laws of our foundation;  
I must not suffer this, yet 'tis but the lees  
And settlings of a melancholy blood:  
But this will cure all straight; one sip of this  
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight,  
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise and taste - "

It was of course Milton's intention to sing the praises of

chastity, and therefore the lady comes out victorious from the blandishments and wiles of Comus. And in this didactic purpose of the poem, as well as in the moral subject chosen, Milton reveals his Puritanism. He is teaching a lesson, and a moral lesson. As one of the brothers says to the other brother about their sister:

"My sister is not so defenceless left,  
As you imagine; she has a hidden strength  
Which you remember not.

"What hidden strength, (asks the other brother)  
Unless the strength of Heav'n, if you mean that?

"I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,  
Which, if Heav'n gave it, may be termed her own;  
'Tis Chastity, my Brother, Chastity;  
She that has that, is clad in complete steel----"

And later the first brother says:

"..... this I hold firm  
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,  
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;  
Yea even that which mischief meant most harm  
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory:  
But evil on itself shall back recoil,  
And mix no more with goodness, when at last  
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,  
It shall be in eternal restless change  
Self-fed, and self-consumed. If this fail,  
The pillared firmament is rottenness,  
And earth's base built on stubble".

And Milton makes the lady prove the brother's moral assertions true, not merely by resisting all the appeal of Comus, but by her words:

"Fool, do not boast, (she says to Comus)  
 Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind  
 With all thy charms, although this corporal rind  
 Thou hast immanacled, while Heav'n sees good".

And again:

"Imposter, do not charge most innocent Nature,  
 As if she would her children should be riotous  
 With her abundance; she, good cateress,  
 Means her provision only to the good  
 That live according to her sober laws,  
 And holy dictate of spare temperance".

And in language of scorn touched with pity she says:

"To him that dares  
 Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words  
 Against the sun-clad power of Chastity,  
 Fain would I say something, - yet to what end?  
 Thou has not ear, nor soul to apprehend  
 The sublime motion, and high mystery  
 That must be uttered to unfold the sage  
 And serious doctrine of Virginity;  
 And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know  
 More happiness than this thy present lot".

In "Comus", as in the "Faerie Queene", we see a blending in literature of the ideals of the Humanist and of the Puritan. The drapery of the Humanist is there, but it is used to clothe a living spirit which represents a Puritan virtue; and the whole purpose of the poem is to depict human life not on its natural level, but on a spiritual plane - fortified and ennobled by a moral purpose. If we take Milton's two other early poems "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" as forming a whole, which I think we should,

then the same truth is apparent. The former depicts the 'natural' and all too common craving for mirth and pleasure, while the latter extols not melancholy in our sense, but the quiet, contemplative mind.

"Hence, loathed Melancholy,  
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born....."<sup>1</sup>

is the natural, pleasure-seeking man's attitude to life. But this is confronted by another attitude:

"Hence, vain deluding joys,  
The brood of folly without father bred....."<sup>2</sup>

In these two poems Milton depicts on the one hand the spirit of "Merry England", and on the other, the spirit of the Puritan that looks askance at pleasure - "vain deluding joys" - and thinks of the span of life as the opportunity of gleaning wisdom and knowledge.

"And may at last my weary age  
Find out the peaceful hermitage,  
The hairy gown and mossy cell,  
Where I may sit and rightly spell  
Of every star that heav'n doth show,  
And ev'ry herb that sips the dew;  
Till old experience do attain  
To something like prophetic strain.  
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,  
And I with thee will choose to live".

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1: L'Allegro. lines 1 and 2.  
2: Il Penseroso. Lines 1 and 2.



When we pass to Milton's greater works - "Paradise Lost" and its sequel, and "Samson Agonistes" - we not only see the poet at his best, but we see the poet disciplined and chastened by the intervening years of civil and religious upheaval which extended from 1640 to 1660. Milton had hoped and planned and worked for a free Commonwealth and a free Church. And it must have been a severe blow to such a freedom-loving mind to see Monarchy and Episcopacy restored. And to add to his bitterness there was the physical disability of blindness which had by 1660 overtaken him.

Is this the reason why Milton in "Paradise Lost" makes Satan the hero of the poem? We can't for a moment imagine that Puritan Milton had any love for evil, of which Satan is the personification, and in the poem he condemns Satan;

"Him the Almighty Power  
Hurled headlong flaming from th'ethereal sky,  
With hideous ruin and combustion, down  
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
In adamant chains and penal fire,  
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to Arms".<sup>1</sup>

"O alienate from God, O spirit accurst,  
Forsaken of all good, .....<sup>2</sup>

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1: "Paradise Lost". Book I. lines 44-49.  
2: Ibid. V. lines, 877-878.

"Apostate, still thou err'st, nor end wilt find  
Of Erring, from the path of truth remote:  
Unjustly thou deprav'st it with the name  
Of servitude to serve whom God ordains,  
Or Nature; God and Nature bid the same,  
When he who rules is worthiest, and excels  
Them whom he governs".<sup>1</sup>

And Milton makes Satan himself speak as if conscious  
of his sin;

"..... to thee I call,  
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,  
O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,  
That bring to my remembrance from what state  
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere;  
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,  
Warring in heav'n against heav'n's matchless King.  
Ah, wherefore! He deserved no such return  
From me, whom He created what I was  
In that bright eminence, and with His good  
Upbraided none; nor was His service hard".<sup>2</sup>

And Satan seems to regret his wilful folly: speaking to  
himself he says,

"Nay, cursed be thou; since against His thy will  
Chose freely what it now so justly rues.  
The miserable! which way shall I fly  
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?  
Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell; .....<sup>3</sup>

Yet, while Milton has no admiration for the dis-  
obedience of Satan, who is the author of all man's woes,

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- 1: "Paradise Lost", Book VI. lines 172-180.  
2: Ibid. Bk. IV. lines 32:45.  
3: Ibid. Lines 71-75.

he does, as is generally acknowledged,<sup>1</sup> make Satan an exceedingly fascinating character almost the hero of the poem. And it seems to the writer that the explanation is to be found, not in any conscious effort to extol Satan, but in the fact that the rebellious character of Satan lent itself most naturally to the poet's mood at the time. Had not Milton spent the best years of his life in ceaseless efforts to attain the Kingdom of his noblest dreams - freedom in Church and State? And did it not seem in the years when "Paradise Lost" was being written, as if his earthly paradise was lost? Charles II restored to the throne; episcopacy the only tolerated religion! In depicting the ambitious and disappointed Satan Milton could give rein to his own pent-up feelings:

"O had His powerful destiny ordained  
Me some inferior Angel, I had stood  
Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised  
Ambition".<sup>2</sup>

The same sense of disappointment appears again in "Samson Agonistes"; the blind and captive Samson - and Milton was blind at this time - cries ;

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- 1: Vide Grierson, "Cross Currents in English Literature in the Seventeenth Century", pp. 254-257.  
2: "Paradise Lost", Bk. IV. lines 58-61.

"Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed  
 As of a person separate to God,  
 Designed for great exploits, if I must die  
 Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out.....?"<sup>1</sup>

"Promise was that I  
 Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;  
 Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him  
 Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,  
 Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke".<sup>2</sup>

And one cause of Milton's disappointment seems to be  
 clearly expressed in this poem;

"But what more oft in nations grown corrupt,  
 And by their vices brought to servitude,  
 Than to love bondage more than liberty,  
 Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;  
 And to despise, or envy, or suspect  
 Whom God hath of His special favour raised  
 As their deliverer? If he aught begin,  
 How frequent to desert him, and at last  
 To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds".<sup>3</sup>

The nation had gone back on the work and achievements of  
 Cromwell, and on the labours and hopes of Milton.

In the same two poems Milton also airs another grievance,  
 his unfortunate marriage with Mary Powell. Unhappily married  
 to one who was no help-meet mentally or spiritually, he seems  
 to recall that disaster when he makes Samson say:

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- 1: "Samson Agonistes;" ll. 30-33.  
 2: Ibid. ll. 38-42.  
 3: Ibid. ll. 268-274.

"O indignity! O blot  
 To honour and religion! Servile mind  
 Rewarded well with servile punishment!  
 The base degree to which I now am fall'n,  
 . . . . ., is not yet so base  
 As was my former servitude, ignoble,  
 Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,  
 True slavery; and that blindness worse than this,  
 That saw not how degenerately I served".<sup>1</sup>

And there is much more to the same purpose in this poem. In "Paradise Lost" he gives us his ideal of marriage. While Milton did not want "indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind" in a wife, he does not seem to have desired a wife equal to himself in mental achievement. Nor would he have been a strong advocate of woman's rights in our sense, nor have omitted the word "obey" from the marriage service! Eve is in perfect sympathy with Adam, but not an equal.. She is a humble admirer of her lord and master.

"My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st  
 Unargued I obey, so God ordains;  
 God is thy law, thou mine; to know no more  
 Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.  
 With thee conversing I forget all time,  
 All seasons and their change, all please alike"; etc.<sup>2</sup>

In this poem the Humanist Milton draws a picture of physical love<sup>3</sup> that is scarcely less sensual than anything in the literature of the humanists, but the Puritan Milton comes in and modifies the picture;

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- 1: "Samson Agonistes". ll. 411-419.  
 2: "Paradise Lost", ll. 635-656. Book IV.  
 3: Ibid. ll. 689-775.

"Hail wedded love! Mysterious law, true source  
 Of human offspring, sole propriety  
 In Paradise of all things common else.  
 By thee adulterous lust was driv'n from men  
 Among the bestial herds to range; by thee  
 Founded in reason, loyal, just and pure,  
 Relations dear, and all the charities  
 Of father, son, and brother first were known.  
 Far be it, that I should write thee sin or blame,  
 Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,  
 Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,  
 Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced....."<sup>1</sup>

And later Milton makes the angel say to Adam:

"But if the sense of touch whereby mankind  
 Is propagated seem such dear delight  
 Beyond all other, think the same vouchsafed  
 To cattle and each beast; which would not be  
 To them made common and divulged, if aught  
 Therein enjoyed were worthy to subdue  
 The soul of man, or passion in him move.  
 What higher in her society thou find'st  
 Attractive, human, rational, love still;  
 In loving thou dost well, in passion not,  
 Wherein true love consists not; love refined  
 The thoughts, and heart enlarges: hath his seat  
 In reason, and is judicious; is the scale  
 By which to heav'nly love thou may'st ascend,  
 Not sunk in carnal pleasure;....."<sup>2</sup>

And Adam replies;

"Neither her outside loomed so fair, nor aught  
 In procreation . . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 So much delights me, as those graceful acts,  
 Those thousand decencies that daily flow  
 From all her words and actions, mixed with love  
 And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned  
 Union of mind, or in us both one soul. . . . ."<sup>3</sup>

- 1: "Paradise Lost". ll.750-761. Book IV.  
 2: Ibid. Book VIII. ll.579-593.  
 3: Ibid.lines: 596-604.

In this poem too Milton deplores the late contentions in Church and State;

"O shame to men! devil with devil damned  
Firm concord holds, men only disagree  
Of creatures rational, though under hope  
Of heav'nly grace; and God proclaiming peace,  
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife  
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,  
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy;  
As if, which might induce us to accord,  
Man had no hellish foes enow besides,  
That day and night for his destruction wait".<sup>1</sup>

Milton however had been no strong advocate of peace, except on those terms which in state and church the Puritans desired. Could all men have seen that freedom meant what Milton extolled in his "Ready way to establish a Free Commonwealth", then there might have been peace: but Milton was not prepared for peace on Anglican and Royalist lines.

Taking 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained' as a whole, it is not difficult to see the influence of Puritan thought on Milton. The theme of these two poems is of course Biblical. The former takes its inspiration largely from the early chapters of Genesis - the Creation, the temptation and the fall; the latter chiefly from the Gospel story of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, where unlike our first parents, he vanquished the tempter. It is a theme which any religious writer might have adopted, as Spenser did in his "Hymn on

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1. "Paradise Lost". Book II. Lines 496-505.

Heavenly Love".<sup>1</sup> Spenser however dwelt chiefly on the love of Christ as seen in his redemption of man by death on the Cross. Milton mentions this idea but it is not this that occupies the pages of "Paradise Regained"; and it seems to us that while Milton was conversant with Puritan theology and could not break away from it entirely, he nevertheless emphasised a much more modern note.

Milton is speaking about the fallen angels cast out of Heaven when he says;

"Others more mild,  
Retreated in a silent valley, sing  
Their own heroic deeds and hapless fall  
By doom of battle; and complain that fate  
Free virtue should enthrall to force or chance".<sup>2</sup>

"Others apart sat on a hill retired,  
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high  
Of providence, fore knowledge, will, and fate,  
Fixed fate, free will, fore knowledge absolute;  
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost:  
Of good and evil much they argued then,  
Of happiness and final misery,  
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame,  
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy:"<sup>3</sup>

Here are devils occupied with the high problems of Puritan theology!

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- 1: Vide Supra. p. 321.  
2: "Paradise Lost", Bk.II. lines 546-551.  
3: Ibid. 557-565.



And Milton's answer to the fallen angel's problem of fate and free-will is surely given in what he says of Satan;

"To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds  
Timorous and slothful".<sup>1</sup>

In other words Milton's idea of predestination was perfectly moral and not arbitrary. Men are not predestined to eternal bliss or to eternal woe by a fixed fate that is beyond the understanding of human reason. Fate has nothing of chance in it. It is merely the decree of God that blessedness shall follow goodness and woe evil as night succeeds day. Man is free, and his own choice decides the end. Milton makes God say to his Son, when speaking of the lot of Satan,

"Whose fault?  
Whose but his own? Ingrate! He had of me  
All he could have: I made him just and right,  
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.  
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.  
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere  
Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love,  
Where only, what they needs must do, appeared,  
Not what they would? What praise could they receive?  
What pleasure I from such obedience paid,  
When will and reason, reason also is choice,  
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,  
Made passive both, had served necessity,  
Not me". 2

And he goes on :

1: Ibid. Bk. II. lines, 116-117.  
2: Ibid. Bk. III. Lines. 96-111.

"They therefore, as to right belonged,  
 So were created, nor can justly accuse  
 Their Maker, or their making, or their fate;  
 As if predestination over-ruled  
 Their will, disposed by absolute decree  
 Or high fore knowledge: they themselves decreed  
 Their own revolt, not I....."<sup>1</sup>

Milton's doctrine of 'Grace' was also more moral than the  
 Puritan doctrine of "imputed righteousness", which said in  
 effect;

"Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will,  
 Yet not of will in him, but grace in me  
 Freely vouchsafed".<sup>2</sup>

So speaks Milton's God in the poem, and it is the voice of  
 Puritanism and of evangelicalism. And later Milton says;

".....He, who comes thy Saviour, shall recure,  
 Not by destroying Satan, but his works  
 In thee and in thy seed: nor can this be  
 But by fulfilling that which thou did'st want,  
 Obedience to the law of God, imposed  
 On penalty of death, and suffering death,  
 The penalty to thy transgression due,  
 And due to theirs which out of thine shall grow:  
 So only can high justice rest appaid.  
 . . . . . thy punishment  
 He shall endure by coming in the flesh  
 To a reproachful life and cursed death,  
 Proclaiming life to all who shall believe  
 In his redemption; and that His obedience  
 Imputed becomes theirs by faith; his merits  
 To save them, not their own, though legal, works".<sup>3</sup>

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- 1: Ibid. lines. 111-117  
 2: Ibid. lines. 173-175.  
 3: Ibid. Bk. XII. lines 393-410.

But Milton then stresses the 'doctrine of Works', which he has almost just denied. Speaking of Christ's death and resurrection, he says;

"Out of His grave, fresh as the dawning light,  
Thy ransom paid, which man from death redeems,  
His death for man, as many as offered life  
Neglect not, and the benefit embrace  
By faith not void of works".<sup>1</sup>

And God's Grace would seem to be the gift of the Spirit to man which enables him to do the works of God;

"His Spirit within them, and the law of faith  
Working through love upon their hearts shall write,  
To guide them in all truth, and also arm  
With spiritual armour, able to resist  
Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts".<sup>2</sup>

Moreover "Paradise Regained" is really nothing more than an object lesson to man of how he, like Jesus, should resist the temptations to disobedience to the will of God, and in the interests of moral good be prepared to endure suffering and privation. As Satan says of Christ;

"And opportunity I here have had  
To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee  
Proof against all temptation, as a rock  
Of adamant, and as a centre firm....."<sup>3</sup>

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- 1: Ibid. lines. 423-427.  
2: Ibid. lines. 488-492.  
3: "Paradise Regained" Bk. IV. lines 531-534.

Of course the Puritans as a whole, while in theory believing in justification by faith alone, or in imputed righteousness, nevertheless in practice were stern believers in, and enforcers of, a moral life. This we have seen in a previous section. But there was no more serious advocate of the moral life than Milton. As Dowden says, "One primary truth filled all his mind - acceptance of the divine rule, submission to the divine mandate; heroic patience in accepting the will of God, heroic energy in making the will of God prevail; entire obedience, and through obedience, freedom".<sup>1</sup>

And it is on the ground that the Spirit, which leads believer into all truth, is given to man, that Milton takes his stand with those Puritans who opposed the fettering of man's consciences by arbitrary beliefs and practices.

"Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,  
 Who all the sacred mysteries of heav'n  
 To their own vile advantage shall turn  
 Of lucre and ambition, and the truth  
 With superstitions and traditions taint,  
 Left only in those written records pure,  
 Though not but by the Spirit understood.  
 Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,  
 Places, and titles, and with these to join  
 Secular power, though feigning still to act  
 By Spiritual, to themselves appropriating  
 The Spirit of God, promised alike and giv'n  
 To all believers; and from that pretence  
 Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force  
 On every conscience . . . . .  
 . . . . . force the Spirit of Grace itself, and bind  
 His Consort liberty".<sup>2</sup>

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1: Dowden, "Puritan and Anglican" p. 196.

2: "Paradise Lost" Bk. XII. Lines 508-526.

And Milton expresses his own feelings on this matter in the question;

"Who against faith and conscience can be heard  
Infallible?"<sup>1</sup>

Passing from John Milton to John Bunyan<sup>2</sup>, (1628-1688) we come to a very different type of man. Unlike Milton or Spenser, Bunyan had no college training and very little discipline at school. He was largely a self-educated man whose chief text-books seem to have been the Bible and two Puritan publications on piety<sup>3</sup> which his wife contributed to their home. He lived however in stirring times when an intelligent youth could not but pick up a good smattering of information on important matters. His life falls within a period of intense religious and political feeling and strife, when the autocracy of Charles I and Laud were succeeded by the Civil War and the Presbyterian Experiment, which were in turn followed by the Cromwellian experiment of larger freedom especially in religion.

It was a time too when Puritanism was largely

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- 1: "Paradise Lost", Bk. XII. Lines 529-530.
  - 2: For an account of his life vide Dr. J. Brown's "John Bunyan".
  - 3: "The Practice of Piety", by Bishop Bayley, and "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven", by Arthur Dent. Vide, "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners", par. 15.

dominating religious thought and expressing its zeal in restrictive moral legislation.

It cannot be wondered at therefore that Bunyan, having no scholarship to fit him to think for himself, and to enable him to criticise with approval or disapproval the current theological ideas and moral standards, should become a real child of Puritanism. And his experiences in the parliamentary army, if he were thrown into contact with men whose thoughts were occupied with such matters as Baxter and Milton<sup>1</sup> describe, would only help to confirm him in the Puritan faith.

It is as an advocate of theological and moral Puritanism that Bunyan reveals himself in his writings. His stories may be fascinating allegories which even children and the unlearned may enjoy without detecting the theological background of Bunyan's mind, but that background is there, as the skeleton on which he has built up the living organism. And Bunyan's sole purpose in writing is the purpose of the preacher - to win his readers to a way of life; and in his case it is the Puritan way. As he says in his "Apology" for the "Pilgrim's Progress";

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1: Vide Supra pp. 176-177.

"And thus it was: I, writing of the way  
And race of saints, in this our gospel day,  
Fell suddenly into an allegory  
About their journey, and the way to glory,"<sup>1</sup>

"May I not write in such a style as this?  
In such a method too, and yet not miss  
My end - thy good?"<sup>2</sup>

"This book will make a traveller of thee,  
If by its counsel thou wilt ruled be.  
It will direct thee to the Holy Land,  
If thou wilt its directions understand:  
Yes, it will make the slothful active be;<sup>3</sup>  
The blind also delightful things to see".

While these sentiments express the purpose of the "Pilgrim's Progress", they also express Bunyan's attitude to life, and indeed the purpose of all his literary works.

Like Baxter - but more so - Bunyan in his youth had been fascinated by and had enjoyed the pleasures of the village green.<sup>4</sup> Puritan notions about sports and pastimes, however, so worked on his conscience and imagination, that he came to fear that the belfry might fall upon him when the bells were being rung for pleasure. Forsaking these simple pleasures and beginning to attend church only added however, to his fears, and plunged him at last into the "Slough of Despond" when he

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1: "The Author's Apology for His Book". Lines 7-10.

2: Ibid. lines 61-63

3: Ibid. lines 211-216.

4: Vide "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners",  
pars. 20-24: 33-35.

despaired of life and envied the very birds. The mysteries of Puritan theology with its doctrines of election and predestination were the cause of this. Bunyan like many another couldn't understand the ways of God: and the only thing that seemed certain was that he was predestined to eternal damnation and had committed the unpardonable sin - whatever that was. Light however dawned on his despairing soul after conversing with some godly women in Bedford, and he saw that his righteousness was not in himself, but imputed to him by the merits of Jesus Christ. It was some time before he found that peace of heart which was the assurance of election. But later this came suddenly upon him. "One day, as I was passing in the field", he writes, "And that too with some dashes on my Conscience, fearing lest all was not yet right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, 'Thy Righteousness is in Heaven;' and methought withal I saw, with the Eyes of my Soul, Jesus Christ at God's Right Hand. There, I say, was my righteousness; so that wherever I was, or what ever I was a-doing, God could not say of me, 'He wants my Righteousness', for that was just before him. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of Heart that made my Righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my Righteousness worse; for my Righteousness was Jesus Christ himself....."<sup>1</sup>

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1: Grace A bounding. par. 229.



Bunyan accepted the Puritan theology in its entirety, as well as the Puritan moral idealism. And these Puritan ideas run through all his works<sup>1</sup>, and are the ideas which he clothes in allegorical garments in the two books of the "Pilgrim's Progress", the "Holy War" and the "Life and Death of Mr Badman" - the only books which entitle him to a place among English men of letters.

What Bunyan thought about the natural man and his pleasures and sins may be seen in his description of "Vanity Fair" - "a fair wherein should be sold all sorts of vanity..... as houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, and delights of all sorts, as whores, bawds, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not..... at this fair ..... is.... to be seen juggling, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves, and rogues.....thefts, murders, adulteries, false swearing<sup>2</sup>.... And the lords of this fair, whose prince is Beelzebub, are Old Man, Carnal Delight, Luxurious, Desire of Vain Glory, Lechery, and Having Greedy<sup>3</sup>. The wares sold are such as the christian must not buy, and the patrons of the fair such as the christian must not consort with. He must hurry through

- 1: Bunyan issued 60 publications. Vide Cambridge History of English Literature. Vol.VIII. p.177  
 2: Pilgrim's Progress. (Ballantyne Press) p.88  
 3: Ibid. p.94

this "Vanity Fair", though doubtless, as Christian and Faithful were taken and confined in a cage and made "the objects of man's sport, or malice, or revenge",<sup>1</sup> so will he who shuns these worldly things be made a sport of and a laughing-stock. And he will be despised and hated and ill-treated, since his judges are Messrs No-good, Malice, Love-lust, Live-loose, and their like.<sup>2</sup>

In "The Holy War", Bunyan from another angle comes to the same subject. The City of Mansoul is being attacked by Diabolous who makes "havoc of all.....the laws and statutes of Shaddai.....such as the doctrines of morals, with all civil and natural documents.....for (his) design was to turn Mansoul into a brute, and to make it like to the sensual sow,.....and.....set up his own vain edicts and statutes... ..such as gave liberty to the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life.....He encouraged, countenanced and promoted lasciviousness and all ungodliness there....."<sup>3</sup> Lord Lusting was made Lord Mayor, and the Burgesses and Aldermen are Messrs Incredulity, Haughty, Swearing, Whoring, etc.<sup>4</sup>

In "The Life and Death of Mr Badman", Bunyan gives us the progress of a wicked man to hell. It is really the

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1: Ibid. p. 91

2: Ibid. p. 96.

3: "Holy War", (Ballantyne Press). Same Volume as "Pilgrim's Progress". pp. 345-346.

4: Ibid. p. 347.

converse of the "Pilgrim's Progress". Badman is addicted to almost every imaginable sin in the Puritan catalogue of sins - Sabbath-breaking, swearing, drunkenness, uncleanness, deception and the denial of the truth of the Scriptures. ".....When he did light among those that were bad, then he would be as they, but yet more close and cautiously, except he were sure of his company: Then he would carry it openly, be as they; say Dam'hem and Sink'hem, as they. If they railed on Good men, so could he; if they railed on Religion, so could he: if they talked beastly, vainly, idly, so would he; if they were for drinking, swearing, whoring, or any the like villanies, so was he".<sup>1</sup> And Bunyan brings Badman to a bad end; but in the Puritan view, the inevitable and deserved end of such a life. Badman had married a second wife whose conduct gave Badman much sorrow; and Bunyan sees in this God's punishment for Badman's ill-treatment of his first wife. And he goes on to say that they lived together "Some fourteen or sixteen years, even until.....they had sinned all away, and parted as poor as Howlets. And.....how could it be otherwise?.....he with his Whores, and she with her Rogues; and so they brought their Noble to Nine-pence".<sup>2</sup> And after describing his early death due to his sins, Bunyan says: "No man could speak well

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- 1: "Life and Death of Mr Badman". (Ed. J. Brown). Cambridge English Classics, 1905. p. 89.  
 2: Ibid. pp.156-157.

of him when he was gone. His name rotted above ground, as his carkass rotted under".<sup>1</sup> And after death Badman goes to judgment and hell.

This work of Bunyan's is of further interest to us because among the sins of which Badman was guilty was the sin of extortion or usury. To buy cheaply and sell as dearly as possible has been accounted as one of the sins which Puritanism exalted to a virtue. Puritan Bunyan however gave no approval to such practices, but strongly condemned them. We shall return to this however later.<sup>2</sup>

In theology Bunyan took his stand not on the side of 'Free Will' as Milton did, but on the side of 'Election'. And a man was 'saved' not by his own righteousness but by imputed righteousness which came from faith in what Christ had done for him. We have already noticed his own experience in the matter.<sup>3</sup> And he dwells upon this subject in the conversation of Christian and Hopeful with Ignorance in the "Pilgrim's Progress".<sup>4</sup>

Ignorance: "I believe that Christ died for sinners; and that I shall be justified before God from the curse, through his gracious acceptance of my obedience to his law".

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- 1: Ibid. p. 157.
- 2: Vide infra. p. 403.
- 3: Vide Supra, p. 358.
- 4: "Pilgrim's Progress", pp. 143-148.

Christian: ".....this faith is deceitful. Even such as will leave thee under wrath, in the day of God Almighty; for true justifying faith puts the soul, as sensible of its condition by the law, upon flying for refuge unto Christ's righteousness, which righteousness of his is not an act of grace, by which he maketh, for justification, thy obedience accepted with God; but his personal obedience to the law, in doing and suffering for us what that required at our hands; this righteousness, I say, true faith accepteth; under the skirt of which, the soul being shrouded, and by it presented as spotless before God, it is accepted, and acquit from condemnation".<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in the "Holy War" it is Emmanuel or Christ who undertakes to deliver the city of Mansoul from Diabolus. First of all a declaration is issued to the effect, "Let all men know.....that the son of Shaddai.....is engaged by covenant to his Father to bring his Mansoul to him again; yea, and to put Mansoul too, through the Power of his matchless love, into a far better and more happy condition than it was in before taken by Diabolus".<sup>2</sup> This declaration of course is the Scriptures, and it is interesting to notice that Bunyan regarded the Scriptures as a 'plan of salvation'. And the key to the plan was simply faith in Christ. "Then did

1: "Pilgrim's Progress", pp. 146-147.

2: "Holy War", p. 351.

Oredence wind with his men to the townward, and gave to Diabolus the field: so Emmanuel came upon him on the one side, and the Enemies' place was betwixt them both..... when the captains saw that the Prince (Emmanuel) was come..... they shouted, "The sword of Emmanuel, and the shield of Captain Oredence!"<sup>1</sup> In other words, Mansoul did not engage in the fight to free himself from Diabolus. Emmanuel did the fighting, and Mansoul's representative on the field was Captain Oredence - faith; the shield of wicked Mansoul. And when the Prince entered the town of Mansoul, the people "bowed themselves to the ground.....they wept aloud, and asked forgiveness....." "So order was given.....that persons should be employed about their necessary business: and Mr Godly-Fear and one Mr Upright, were to be overseers about the matter: so, persons were put under them.....to bury the slain.....they buried the doubters, and all the skulls and bones, and pieces of bones of doubters,.....Thus they buried.....the election doubters, the vocation doubters, the grace doubters, the perseverance doubters, the resurrection doubters, the salvation doubters, and the glory doubters".<sup>2</sup> All who doubted the Puritan plan of salvation were buried! Though Bunyan was tremendously in earnest about living a moral life, it was not such a life, but faith in the atoning sacrifice

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1: "Holy War", p.559.

2: Ibid. pp. 561, 562, 563, 564.

of Christ, that saved a man from eternal destruction.

In Spenser, Milton and Bunyan we have seen three writers upon whom Puritanism exercised an influence in an ascending scale. Spenser we have claimed was a humanist who endeavoured to use his pen for moral ends. Milton likewise was a humanist, but with even stronger purpose than Spenser he made his writings the vehicle for teaching and suggesting the ways of God for man, and especially God's way to freedom. Bunyan has little of the humanist spirit in his works. His writings may be pleasing because of his genius which clothed abstract graces and emotions and aspirations and doubts and sins in concrete forms, so that they live before us like real persons; but his object was not to please the fancy but to instruct the heart and mind. He is a Puritan preacher from first to last, who would point out the way to the 'Delectable Mountains' and the 'Land of Beulah', the way that runs through the "Wicket Gate" and "Vanity Fair" and is frequented by enemies like Apollyon and 'Giant Despair'.

These three do not exhaust the list of writers who were influenced by Puritanism. We might have mentioned Andrew Marvell, Richard Baxter, and a host of pamphleteers on both religious and political subjects. But our purpose has been to shew, if we can, the influence of Puritanism on the stream of English literature. And in the three writers selected we have endeavoured to shew how the Renaissance literature, which was purely humanistic, and portrayed life from the human end, with

all its passions, sensuousness and sensuality, was diverted into a new channel, and became the means of portraying life not as it is, but as it might be: life ennobled by excellent principles and virtues derived from religious faith.

That the Restoration should witness a reaction from the ideals and purposes which the Puritans cherished with regard to literature is not surprising. Literature is largely an expression of the soul of a people. And the moral reaction from the restrictive Puritan legislation which accompanied the Restoration was but an index of the pent up desires of that portion of the nation which had been living under enforced suppressions during the Puritan regime. It was inevitable therefore that literature should begin to reflect again the ideas and ideals of this class of the community which was glad to be free from the Puritan yoke. Hitherto literature had been censored and the theatre closed. Henceforth these bans were gradually removed.

Not every one took the view of William Prynne who, in his work, "Histrio-Mastix", written in 1633, said, "That all popular and common Stage-Playes, whether Comickall, Tragicall, Satyricall, Mimicall, or mixt of either, (especially, as they are now compiled, and personated among us,) are such sinfull, hurtfull, pernicious Recreations, as are altogether unseemely, and unlawfull unto Christians".<sup>1</sup>

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1: William Prynne, "Histrio-Mastix". (Ed. 1633). p.6



Nor did they agree with him that "effeminate mixt Dancing, Dicing, Stage-playes, lascivious Pictures, wanton Fashions; Face-painting, Health-drinking, Long haire, Love-lockes, Periwigs, womens curling, pou<sup>d</sup>ring and cutting of their haire, Bone-fires, New-yeares-gifts, May-games, amorous Pastoralls, lascivious effeminate Music, Excessive laughter, luxurious disorderly Christmas-Keeping.....are meere sinful, wicked, unchristian pastimes, vanities, cultures and disguises".<sup>1</sup>

The populace of 1660 clamoured for a return of the good old days, And accordingly both literature and the drama began to minister again to their amusement and pleasure rather than to their instruction. Prynne had condemned mercilessly all stage-plays because of their Ribaldrie, Scurrilitie, Amorous Streines, Obscene and filthie jests, etc. - he could not find words too bad to describe them - and among the reasons for his condemnation of them was, that they caused "profuse lascivious laughter, accompanied with an immoderate applause ....."<sup>2</sup>

We cannot wonder that men of a certain type were anxious to get rid of this 'Kill-joy' spirit which, in the interests of moral reform, had dominated in the legislature and threatened and denounced from the pulpits. That a

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1: Ibid. The Epistle Dedicatory, pp.17-18 (pages unnumbered)  
 2: Prynne, "Histrio-Mastix", p. 290.

reaction to the other extreme occurred was but inevitable.

Nevertheless the influence of Puritanism on English literature was not wholly submerged and lost by this reaction. Like a stream driven underground for a time it emerged later cleansed and purified of some of its unwholesome other-worldliness.

Samuel Butler, the satirist, who in his "Hudibras" made a laughing-stock of the preciseness of the newly-formed Royal Society and of the puritans, did much to purge puritanism of bigotry and narrowness, and give it ~~that~~ sanity and reality which made its continuance both reasonable and inevitable.

From that time it is difficult to say with truth what writers have been influenced by puritanism. But among the Victorian writers how shall we account for the moral purpose which animated Ruskin, Tennyson, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Browning and Wordsworth, to mention only a few of the outstanding names, except on this hypothesis?

Art is subservient to goodness with all these writers, and they give no place to erotic poetry which borders on lewdness, nor does mere sensuous beauty and imagery suffice. "Continental, if not English, critics", says Dowden, "have recognised the fact that a Puritan strain has entered into much that is most characteristic in our literature. It is present in the "Faerie Queen" as well as in "Samson Agonistes"; in the "Vision of Sin", the "Palace of Art", the "Idylls of

the King"; in the poetry of the author of "Dipsychus" and in the poetry of the author of "Christmas Eve and Easter Day"; in the prose of "Sartor Resartus". And though Matthew Arnold said hard things, and some of them not without good reason, of English Puritanism, the son of Thomas Arnold could not escape from an hereditary influence; the Hellenic tendency in his poetry is constantly checked and controlled by the Hebraic tendency as it had been accepted and modified by the English mind".<sup>1</sup>

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1: Dowden, "Puritan and Anglican". p. 14.

## CHAPTER FIVE.

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### PURITANISM AND THE ETHICS OF BUSINESS.

Whatever benefits the English nation may have derived from the Puritans' influence on public and private morals, on religious and political freedom, and on the ideals and purposes of literature, it would seem that in the sphere of business morality their influence was baneful. W. Cunningham, who is an authority on the history of economics in England, says; "The triumph of Puritanism swept away all traces of any restriction or guidance in the employment of money".<sup>1</sup> What he means is that the Puritans advocated and adopted a policy of 'Laissez faire' in business; that it seemed perfectly right to them to 'go as you please'; drive hard bargains for their own advantage; be thorough-going individualists in the making of money, rather than being restrained by the thought of one's duty to others.

This is a strong indictment to make of a party which in other spheres was so zealous for the moral life. And in the following pages we shall attempt to trace briefly the economic changes which came about in England during the period of Puritan activity.

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1: "The Moral Witness of the Church on the Investment of Money". (1909). p. 25.

The Anglican Church in the reign of Edward VI took over from the Roman Church many things which occasioned the Puritan reaction. Vestments, ceremonies and polity (episcopacy), were however not the only things taken over. There was also the traditional idea about business-ethics which came under the term 'usury'. The attitude to usury in Edward VI reign can be seen in the Act of 1552, entitled "A Byll against Usurie".<sup>1</sup> It read; ".....Forasmuche as usurie is by the worde of God utterly prohibited, as a vyce moste odyous and detestable, as in dyvers places of the hollie Scriptures it is evydent to be seene, whiche they by no godly teaching and perswation can synck in to the hart of dyvers gredie uncharitable and couvetous parsons of the Realme, nor yet by anny terrible threatenings of Godds wrathe and vengeance.....will (they) forsake such filthie gayne and lucre onles some temporall punishment be provyded and ordeyned in that bihalfe;....." It was enacted therefore that the Act of Henry VIII<sup>2</sup> of 1545, which had allowed ten per cent interest to be charged on loans, should be repealed, and that in future no interest should be taken on loans under penalty of the forfeiture of such interest, with an additional fine and imprisonment. This Act of Henry's had been made

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- 1: 5 & 6 Edward VI. Cap. 20. (Statutes of the Realm, (1819) Vol. IV. p. 155).  
 2: 37. Henry VIII. Cap. 9 (Statutes of the Realm. (1817) Vol. III. pp. 996-997).

necessary because money-lenders had been in the habit of charging extortionate interest, especially if the loan was not repaid on the appointed day. And the Act sought to regulate this business and restrain greedy money-lenders by fixing the maximum interest chargeable.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to notice that while Edward and his government desired to return to the traditional method of lending money for the bare return of the principal - a fine tradition perhaps, but one that was more ideal than actual - there were, as Henry's Act reveals, those in this age who were driving hard bargains, and who felt they could do what they liked with their own money.

In the reign of Elizabeth we find parliament still occupied with the same problem. In a debate in the House in 1571 on the second reading of a "Bill against Usury",<sup>2</sup> there was a difference of opinion expressed. A Mr Clarke showed himself to be on the traditional side by quoting Aristotle who said usury was "praeter Naturam"; Plato, who said, "idem ac hominem occidere"; Augustine, who was of the same opinion, and Psalm XV: "Domine, quis habitabit in Tabernaculo tuo.....Qui .....pecuniam suam non dabit ad usuram". And he concluded, "the Canon Law is abolished; and the temporal law says nothing".

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1: Vide W. Cunningham. "English Industry and Commerce".  
(1907) Vol. II. Pt. I. p. 153.

2: Vide D'Ewes, "Journals". pp. 171-174.

It is evident that Mr Clarke deplored the lost authority of the Canon Law, and would have liked the temporal law, by act of parliament, to condemn this unholy thing - usury.

Mr Molley, another member, however was not of the same opinion. He was against excessive usury, but believed that interest on loans was necessary. He said; "The mischief is of the excess not otherwise.. Since to take reasonably, or so that both parties might do good, was not hurtful; for to have any man lend his money without any commodity, hardly should you bring that to pass. And since every man is not an Occupier who hath money, and some which have not money may yet have skill to use money, except you should take away and hinder good Trades, bargaining and contracting cannot be....." prevented.

Dr Wilson, master of Requests, also made a lengthy speech in which he shewed himself to be opposed to usury. He defined it as "taking any reward over and above the dew debt". He was not however an advocate of this position merely because it was the traditional or Canonical one, but because of the practical reason that he saw that interest on loans in business would tend to cause a rise in prices to meet the cost of borrowed money. "Who so shall give hire for money, is to raise the same in the sale of his commodity". And he concluded, "the offence in his Conscience should be judged Felony".

Other speakers took the same attitude. Fleetwood

maintained that "Usury was malum in se", and that the Queen could not "grant that Usury may be used". And Norton said, "all Usury is biting".

In spite of this divided opinion about usury, however, parliament gave its consent this year (1571) to an Act<sup>1</sup> which repealed that of Edward VI, forbidding usury, and virtually restored Henry's Act of 1545 which allowed interest at 10% . Strangely enough the Act is entitled, "An Acte agaynst Usurie"; and section four begins, ...."And forasmuch as all usurie being forbydden by the Lawe of God is synne and detestable....." In spite of its sinfulness, 10 per cent was evidently pardonable!

This law remained in force until 1624, when a new Act<sup>2</sup> reduced the amount of interest to 8%, at which it remained until the Restoration, when it was reduced to 6%. This Act<sup>3</sup> of Charles II says: "That no Person or Persons whatsoever, from and after the twenty ninth Day of September in the year .....one thousand six hundred and sixty, upon any Contract, shall.....take directly or indirectly for Loan of any Monies, Wares, Merchandize or other Commodities whatsoever, above the Value of Six Pounds for the Forbearance of one Hundred Pounds for a Year.....". And from that date all contracts for more than 6% "shall be utterly void", and the offender "shall

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1: 13 Elizabeth, Cap.8  
 2: 21 Jacobi I. Cap.17  
 3: 13 Caroli II. Cap.18.



forfeit and lose for every such offence the treble Value of the Monies.....so lent.....". Brokage was also fixed at 5/- per £100; and the charge for renewing a Bond was fixed at one shilling. The penalty for contravening these charges was a fine of £20 and six months imprisonment. This Statute was confirmed the following year,<sup>1</sup> and was in force till the reign of Anne when interest on loans was reduced to 5%.<sup>2</sup>

Laws are not made unless there is a need for them. And in all these enactments we see the attempt to regulate business transactions and limit the amount of interest charged on loans. It is evident therefore that long before puritanism became a force in England business men were driving hard bargains and being guilty of what the Church called usurious conduct.

The fact is also seen in the many attempts which were made to prevent landlords, merchants and business-men from pursuing courses which were considered too advantageous for themselves and too detrimental to others. It was not then an accepted idea that a man can do what he likes with his own property, or use his brains and skill solely for his own advantage. If others suffered in the process, then such conduct was usurious and culpable. We must not imagine however that business-men and property owners were all christian idealists in that age, and that the Kingdom of Heaven really existed

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1: 13 Caroli II. Cap. 14.  
2: 12. Anne 2. Cap. 16.

on earth. Theory was one thing, practice another.

Before the Reformation, for instance, landlords, ~~for~~ the sake of making greater profits on wool than they made from agriculture, turned their lands largely into pasturage for sheep, and with this they turned adrift a considerable number of agricultural workers who found it difficult to make a living. "Your shepe", wrote Sir Thomas More in 1516, "that were.....so smal eaters, now.....be become so great devower-ers.....that they eate up, and swallow downe the very men them selves. They consume, destroye, and devoure whole fieldes, howses, and cities". And he goes on, "Noblemen, and gentlemen; yea and certeyn Abbottes, holy men no doubt, not contenting them selves with the yearely revenues and profytes.....leave no groundes for tillage, thei inclose al into pastures; thei throw doune houses:.....plucke downe townes, and leave nothing standynge, but only the churche to be made a shepe-howse.....husbandmen be thrust owte of their owne.....; by one meanes....or.....other, Either by hooke or crooke they muste needes departe awaye,.....out of their knowen and accustomed howses, fyndynge no place to reste in".<sup>1</sup>

This matter became so serious because of the growth of unemployment, that the Government was compelled to try and check it. In 1514 Henry VIII issued a proclamation against

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1. Utopia, (Ed. Raphe Robynson, 1898) pp. 18-19.

'Engrossers' of farms, forbidding them to hold more than one farm, and ordering that all houses of husbandry decayed since the beginning of his father's reign should be once more "put in tillage, and inhabited and dwelt in by husbandmen and labourers, according as it was before the engrossing of the said houses".<sup>1</sup> And in 1515<sup>2</sup> and 1516<sup>3</sup> laws were enacted which sought to regulate this practice. Tillage lands turned to pasturage were ordered to be restored under penalty of half the value of the land being forfeited to the king. But nearly twenty years later, in 1534, another Act<sup>4</sup> sought to correct the abuses which still continued, by forbidding anyone to keep more than 2,000 sheep. And a fine for default was fixed at 3/4d for every sheep above the 2,000.

Divines inveighed against these evils and abuses from their pulpits. Hugh Latimer preaching before Edward VI said, "At marchandes handes, no kynd of wares can be had, except we gene for it to muche. You landelords, you rentreisers, I maye saye you steplordes, you vnnaturall lordes, you haue for your proffessions yerely to much".<sup>5</sup> And he says that rents

- 1: Vide Traill (H.D.) and Mann (J.S.) "Social England". (1901-4) Vol. III. p.115.
- 2: 6 Henry VIII. Cap.5 (Statutes of the Realm, (1817) Vol.III. p.127.
- 3: 7 Henry VIII. Cap.1 Ibid. pp. 176-177.
- 4: 25. Henry VIII. Cap.13. Ibid. pp. 451-454.
- 5: 1. Seven Sermons before Edward VI. (Ed. E. Arber 1869) pp. 38-39.

that had been £20 to £40 a year, they had raised to £50 and £100 a year. And he attributes the 'dearth' to such practices, and says "that poore menne (whyche liue of theyr laboure) can not wyth the sweate of their face haue a living, all kinde of victuals is so deare, pigges, gese, capons, chickens, egges, etc".<sup>1</sup>

The Rev. Thomas Lever in a sermon at St. Paul's Cross, while trying to justify or excuse the conduct of Henry VIII, with regard to the Monasteries, on the ground that the King had used the money for the worthy purposes of the kingdom - education, the relief of the poor and the setting forth of God's word - which money had hitherto been "supersticiously spente vpon vayne ceremonies, or voluptuously upon idle bellies", nevertheless condemned those who had come into the monastery lands, and were following the King's example by re-selling. He said: "Couetouse officers haue so vsed thys matter, that euen those goodes whyche dyd serue to the releue of the poore, the mayntenaunce of learnyng, and to comfortable necessary hospitalitie in ye comenwealth, be now turned to maynteyne worldly, wycked, couetouse ambition.....You whych haue gotten these goodes into your own handes, to turne them from euyl to worse, and other goodes mo frome good vnto euyl, be ye sure it is euen you that haue offended God, begyled the Kinge,

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1: Seven Sermons before Edward VI. (Ed. E. Arber, 1869).  
pp. 38-39

robbed the ryche, spoyled the pore and brought a comen wealth into a comen miserye".<sup>1</sup>

The same Divine, attacking the actions of extortionate middlemen, speaks of them as "Marchauntes of myschiefe..... who do make all thinges dere to the byers; and yet wonderfull vyle and of small pryce to many, that must nedes sett or sell that whyche is their owne honestlye come bye.....These haue euerye maunes lyuyng, and doo no mans duytye.....These be ydle vacaboundes, lyuyng vpon other mens labours: these be named honest barginers, and be in dede craftye couetouse extorcioners. ....these.....crafty theues, do make a scarsitye and dearth of all thynges that commeth through theyr handes..... God hath geuen vnto thys realme.....great abundance of corne, cattell, landes, goodes, and all wares that be good and profitable:.....it is certeynly the vnfaithfull disposers whyche cause a great scarsyty, dearth and lacke of all these giftes and treasures of God".<sup>2</sup>

Human nature however has always been prone to take advantage of its opportunities and tempted to do what it likes with its own. In spite of laws, therefore, and the condemnation of the clergy, so long as sheep-farming was more profitable than corn-growing, it was impossible for the government to do more than attempt to regulate this new departure and prevent or punish gross abuses.<sup>3</sup> As in the matter of interest on loans,

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1: "Sermons", 1550. (Ed.E. Arber, 1870) 2: Ibid. pp.129-132.

3: Harrison tells of the same abuses mentioned by the above Divines. Vide "Harrison's Description of England in Shakespeare's youth". Vol. I. pp. 294-303. (Ed. F.J. Furnivall, 1877).

so in this matter, regulation and not prohibition was the only possible way. The hands of the economic clock could not be turned back. Religious aspirations, idealising the economic traditions of the past, and dreaming of the perfect society, might whole-heartedly say, Amen to the prayer of Edward VI: "We heartily pray thee to send thy holy Spirit into the hearts of them that possess the grounds, pastures and dwelling places of the earth, that they, remembering themselves to be thy tenants, may not rack and stretch out the rents of their houses and lands, nor yet take unreasonable fines and incomes, after the manner of covetous worldlings .....but to behave themselves in letting out their tenements, lands and pastures, that after this life they may be received into everlasting dwelling places".<sup>1</sup>

But the real answer to this depopulating policy is to be seen largely in the alarming increase of the poor which called forth the poor-laws of the reigns of Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth. In 1550 it was enacted that labourers refusing to work shall be punished as vagabonds; and the sick and aged poor only shall be relieved by the parish in

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1: A prayer for Landlords. A Book of Private Pyayers sent forth by order of King Edward VI. (1553) vide "Tudor Economic Documents". Ed. Tawney & Powell, Vol.III. pp.62-63

which they were born.<sup>1</sup> But by 1551 it was evident that work could not be found for all the unemployed, and a new Act<sup>2</sup> authorised the collection of alms in every parish and town, which money was to be distributed weekly to the poor. In Mary's reign this Act was confirmed and yet amended in a way which reveals that the poor were too numerous to relieve by means of alms. It was passed that if necessary certain beggars be licensed to beg.<sup>3</sup> In the next reign, the Act of 1572<sup>4</sup> placed this matter on a surer foundation by ordering the authorities to "number all the said poore.....and set downe what porcon the weekeley charge towardes the Releefe..... wyll amounte unto.....and taxe and assesse all and every the Inhabitauntes....." And in 1601 another Act<sup>5</sup> largely confirmed the previous one by continuing taxation; but it also sought to provide work for the unemployed by ordering parishes and towns to provide stocks of Flax, Hemp, Wool, etc. for the unemployed to work upon.

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- 1: 3 & 4 Edward VI. Cap. 16. Statutes of the Realm, Vol.IV. pt. I. p.115.  
 2: 5 & 6. Edward VI. Cap. 2. Ibid. p.131  
 3: 2 & 3. Phil. & Mary. Cap. 5. Ibid. pp. 280-281.  
 4: 14. Elizabeth, Cap. 5. Ibid. pp. 490-498.  
 5: 43. Elizabeth, Cap. 2. Ibid. vol. IV. Pt. 2. pp. 962-965.

Singularly enough though Henry VIII had attempted to regulate the land problem he was nevertheless one of the biggest offenders in the matter, in that his conduct encouraged some of the evils complained of.

The dissolution of the Monasteries for instance gave a fillip to the buying and selling of land, and to the practice of enclosing "common land" in manorial estates. The Abbey lands seized in 1536, and land belonging to the guilds and chantries taken in 1547, were either sold to needy courtiers at ridiculously low prices, or bought up by smart business-men, who re-sold at enhanced prices. Much was also acquired by middlemen, who bought scattered portions of land and held them for a rise in the market. In London, groups of tradesmen formed syndicates to exploit the market. The inevitable result was that land was re-sold at prices that necessitated the purchaser putting up the rents of tenants.<sup>1</sup> Sir John Yorke for instance, a speculator in the lands of Whitby Abbey, raised the rents of his tenants from £29 to £64 a year. And for nearly twenty years tenants were besieging the Government with petitions for redress.<sup>2</sup>

With merchants and manufacturers there was a similar eagerness to grow wealthy by profiteering, and the Government

1: Vide H.A.L. Fisher. "Political History of England" (1485-1547). Appendix II.

2: "Select Cases in the Court of Requests". (Selden Society) pp. 56-59.



made similar attempts to prevent injustice by regulating prices, fixing standards of quality for manufactured articles, standardising weights and measures, and prohibiting the cornering of food-stuffs.

To prevent the exportation of corn, which naturally raised prices at home by making it scarce, An Act was passed in 1563 preventing the buying up of corn by merchants unless specially licenced by the justices of the peace.<sup>1</sup> And exportation was only allowed when the home price had fallen below a fixed sum. In 1593 the price was fixed at 20/- a quarter.<sup>2</sup>

Sixty years before (1534) an Act<sup>3</sup> of Henry VIII had given powers to fix the prices of food-stuffs in order to prevent profiteering, and in 1586 Elizabeth issued a Proclamation in which she threatened to enforce this Act of 1534. The reason was that in 1586 there was a scarcity of corn due to 'cornering'. The Proclamation says: ".....it is manifestly knowen the sayd Dearth to have bene wilfully encreased in very many places.....not onely by and through the covetousnesse of many engrossers of Corne and Cornemasters,

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1: 5. Elizabeth. Cap. 12. Statutes of the Realm, 1819.  
Vol. IV. Pt. I. pp. 439-441.

2: 35. Elizabeth, Cap. 7. Sect. 5. Statutes of the Realm.  
Vol. IV. Pt. II. p. 855.

3: 25. Henry VIII. Cap. 1 & 2. Statutes of the Realm.  
Vol. III. pp. 436-439.

but also by unlawful transportation of Grayne, and lacke also of preservation of store in time requisite. Her Highness.....hath thought good and necessary, for a further remedie against the uncharitable covetousnesse of the Cornemasters.....to notifie, that if such as be the great Cornemasters and owners of Grayne, or of other necessarie victual for foode of the poore, shall not be willing, or doe not performe these orders, whereby the poorer sort may be relieved in the markets at reasonable prices, or that it shall appeare that other needefull victuals shall by covetousnesse of any person growe to excessive prices, to the pinching of the poorer sort: Then her Highnesse doth hereby signifie, that she wil not onely severely punish the offenders for their cruel covetousnes and offences against her orders, but will also for redresse.....give order that reasonable prices shall be set both on Corne and other victuals to be solde for the reliefe of her Maiesties poore Subjects....."<sup>1</sup>

The artificial raising of prices by 'cornering' seems to have continued in spite of this Proclamation. Ten years later, July 1596, the Queen issued another Proclamation to the same effect. In this her majesty speaks of "the unreasonable encrease of prices of Graine, to the Griefe

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1: Vide Cunningham, "English Industry & Commerce". Vol.II. Pt. I. p.93. footnote.

of her poorer sort of people that have no living by Tillage", and of "rich Farmers and Ingrossers, (who) pretend to raise the prices by colour of the unseasonableness of this Sommer: yet that being no just cause to raise the prices of their olde Corne of the last yeeres growth". And she gave orders that "the Justices are to assemble and 'diligently to persue the said orders' published in 1595, 'and diligently to consider all such points of those Orders, as may tend to the reformation of all prrsns that by their disorder and covetousnesse, and breach of the said Orders, are the causers directly or indirectly, to encrease the prices of Graine in this lamentable sort beyond reason, and forthwith to proceede to the execution of all such orders, as may with good reason give remedy to the furniture of Markets, and to abate such unreasonable encrease of prices".<sup>1</sup>

That this abuse was real and wide-spread is also evident by the action of the Privy Council which incited Justices of the Peace to make search for and punish such offenders.<sup>2</sup> In the 'Order' to the Sheriff and Justices of Norfolk dated August 25th 1597, they say, ".....God.....hath now yealded us w<sup>th</sup> his blessed hande a chaunge.....in this latter ende of sommer to the great comfort of all sorts of

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1: Vide, Cunningham, Ibid. p.93. footnote.

2: Vide. "Stiffkey Papers, 1580-1620) (H.W.Saunders, 1915) pp.140-141.

people, yet there are seen & founde a number of wicked people in condicions more like to wolves or Cormorants than to naturall men that do most covetously seeke to hold up the late great prizes to corne, & all other victuall by ingrossing the same into their private handes: barganyeng before hand for corne, & in some parte for grayne growing, and for mault before it be made, and for butter and cheese before it be redy to be brought to ordinary markett for to be bought by the poorer number". And they speak of such practices as "foule corrupt fraud & malicious greedy-ness".<sup>1</sup>

The desire for gain is also revealed in the false weights and measures of the period. It would seem as if some merchants kept one set of weights and measures for buying and another set for selling. In 1618 however James I issued a Proclamation for the "Reformation of the great abuses in Weights and Measures and for the due execution of the Office of Clerke of the Market of Our Household and throughout Our Realme of England".<sup>2</sup> The clerk of the maket", it said, "ought to enquire of all abuses in Weights, Beames, Ballances and Measures....." And a fairly comprehensive list of trades upon which he

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1: Ibid. p.140.

2: Vide Cunningham, "English Industry & Commerce", Vol.II. Pt. I. pp.94-95.

must keep an eye is given - "Millers, Bakers, Brewers, Vinteners, Inn-keepers,.....Cookees, Victuallers, Fishmongers, Butchers,.....Grocers.....Clothiers.....Weavers, etc". In 1642 the Long Parliament faced with the same trouble fixed by Statute the **Weights, Measures** and **Yard stick** that must be universally used.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless while all these proclamations and statutes were issued with the avowed intention of preventing usurious practices that fell heavily upon the poor, Elizabeth herself had by granting monopolies, helped to add to the burden of the poor. We have seen the opposition of parliament to her majesty's practice in this matter, and her promise to amend her ways<sup>2</sup>. And that this practice which was continued by James I and Charles I, fell heavily upon the people can be gathered from Mr Martin's speech in the House in 1601. He complained of the "monstrous and unconscionable substitutes to the Monopolitans of Starch, Tinn, Fish, Cloth, Oyl, Vinegar, Salt, and I know not what, nay what not? The principallest commodities both of my Town and County are ingrossed into the hand of those bloodsuckers of the Commonwealth".<sup>3</sup>

Manufacturers too, it would appear, needed to be

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- 1: Scobell, "Acts and Ordinances", Part I. pp.18-20.  
(17. Caroli I. Cap.19).
- 2: Vide Supra, p. 259.
- 3: D'Ewe's, "Journals", p.646.

watched. To regulate the quality of woollen cloth and keep it at a fixed standard, James I in 1605 issued a Proclamation and appointed the Duke of Lennox as the supervisor or Aulnager. The reason for this was that the Walloons from Flanders had settled in England and were making a lighter cloth than the English broad-cloth. English manufacturers naturally were tempted to make lighter cloth too; but objection was not taken to this so long as it was sold as a light material, but to the making of broad-cloth of less weight and disposing of it as being up to standard. The Proclamation says that "divers clothiers heretofore using to make broad Clothes, have changed their Loomes, and Spinnings to the making of the same new inuentions.....the gaine and returne of such new Draperies and late inuented stuffes, and Commodities, made of Wooll or part of Wooll and comparing weight to weight, being farre greater and quicker, and the trade thereof exercised with lesse stocke and charge than is requisite to the making of broad Clothes".<sup>1</sup> A list of lighter fabrics is given, and it is insisted that they be of a certain quality.

A similar law had been in operation since the last year of Edward VI, 1553<sup>2</sup>: and in 1650 a Statute was passed as to how Norwich stuffs were to be made, and it insisted that

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1: Proclamation, Sept. 16th, 1605.

2: Vide 5 & 6 Edward VI. Cap. 6. Statutes of the Realm.  
Vol. IV. Pt.I. pp.136-141.

manufacturers must take an oath that the cloth was according to the set standard.<sup>1</sup> This Act was extended in 1653<sup>2</sup> and confirmed in 1656<sup>3</sup>, when it was further ordered that all goods must be examined by a Warden and sealed if correct under the regulations of a Corporation. Unsealed stuffs - those below the specified quality - were to be confiscated.

It will have become evident that, in spite of traditional ideas as to the making and use of money, the Capitalist spirit was very alive and active in England from at least the beginning of the sixteenth century. As a matter of fact it had always been there to some extent. But the impetus to trade and commerce that was given by the discoveries near the close of the fifteenth century which widened the horizon of man's outlook on the world, no doubt strengthened it. Riches were to be had by the exportation of food and clothing; and it was tempting to landowners to produce wool for the looms, and to middle-men to buy up stocks for export rather than for home consumption. And since money was needed to carry on such business an impetus was also given to borrowing which gave rise to banking<sup>4</sup>, or money lending, as a settled business.

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- 1: 1650. Statute 36, Scobell, "Acts and Ordinances", Pt.II. pp.146-148.  
 2: Anno 1653, Statute 24. Scobell, Pt.II. pp.269-272.  
 3: Anno 1656, Statute 10. Scobell, Pt.II. p.393.  
 4: Vide, Cunningham, "English Industry and Commerce", Vol.II. Part 1. pp.142-161.

Under such circumstances it was impossible, it seems to us, to expect the customs of the Middle-Ages to continue. Men are not prepared to lend their money on risky enterprises without some reward. Nor could it be expected that land-owners and manufacturers could afford to follow the customs and practices which were requisite to a more or less self-contained nation, when the outlook was widened, and the world was becoming their market. Progress under the old traditions would have been impossible.

There is no doubt however that this was to a large extent realised. And the proclamations and statutes which were issued during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had as their object not the prevention of new methods and practises so much as a beneficent regulation of them, in order that injustice might not be inflicted on the poor. This may not be true of Henry VIII's proclamation<sup>1</sup> against 'Engrossers' of farms, or of Edward VI's Bill against usury.<sup>2</sup> But both these monarchs lived in an age that was too dominated by the traditional economic ideas of the Roman church, and too near the beginning of this change in outlook. Theirs was a period of transition. And in such periods it is difficult to make the right decisions.

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1: Vide Supra, p.p. 376-377

2: Vide Supra, p: . 371:



But that the later legislation was regulative rather than preventive can be gathered from the laws themselves. Interest on loans is permitted, not forbidden. But it must be reasonable and not extortionate interest. Moreover, public-opinion can be seen veering gradually to this way of looking at the matter. Dr Thomas Wilson, for instance, who in 1571, during the debate in the House on usury condemned it, and defined usury as "taking any reward over and above the dew debt",<sup>1</sup> seems to have come to a modified position later. In a treatise which he wrote on this subject he is still against usury, if it is oppressive, and he takes his stand with the Roman church on principle. But the principle is that one should deal brotherly with one's neighbour, not exacting from him more than is just; and not that one should lend money without any reward at all. Such an idea seemed to him too foolish to entertain. He wrote, "I would not have men altogether to be enemies to the canon laws, and to condemne every thinge there written, because the Popes were aucthours of them, as though no good laws coulde bee made by them which, God forbid, should either bee spoken or thought.....Nay, I will say playnely, that there are some suche lawes made by the Popes, as be righte godly, saye others what they list".<sup>2</sup>

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1: Vide Supra, p.373.

2: Thomas Wilson, "Discourse upon Usury". (Ed.R.H. Tawney, 1925). p.281.

Nevertheless his position he makes plain in these words:

"I, for my parte, am againste you all that wyll have no usury, or will make the gayne over litle. For, I pray you, what trade or bargayning can there be among merchants, or what lending or borrowinge amonge al men, if you take awaye the assurance and the hope of gayne. What man is so madde to deliver his money out of his owne possession for naughte, or whoe is he that will not make of his owne the best he can? Or whoe is he that will lende to others and wante himself? You see all men now are so wise, that none will lend for moone shine in the water; and therefore if you forbid gaine, you destroy entercourse or merchandize, you overthrowe bargaininge, and you bring all tradinge betwixte man and man to suche confusion, as either men will not deale, or else they will say they cannot tell howe to deale one with an other".<sup>1</sup>

And if under the term usury we include all extortionate charges or dishonest practises, which seems to have been the definition of usury during the period, then the governments from the time of Elizabeth to the Restoration attempted to prevent extortion by fixing prices above which things could not be bought by merchants for

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1: Ibid. p.249.

exportation since if the price was above that mark in the home market, it meant that the commodity was scarce; and it must not therefore be exported and made thereby more scarce and dearer; secondly by setting a standard of quality for materials, and a standard of weights and measures. And this practice was in operation during the puritan ascendancy in the commonwealth period. In 1643 for instance the prices of wines were fixed by statute;<sup>1</sup> and again in 1656 these prices were altered by statute<sup>2</sup>. And in the same year it was enacted that only when bacon was sixpence a pound, and cheese thirty shillings a hundredweight could they be exported. And the price of butter was fixed at four pounds ten shillings a barrel<sup>3</sup>, the weight of which was also standardised.<sup>4</sup>

It is not difficult to see what was the principle at stake during all these years. The England of the sixteenth, and especially of the seventeenth, century was totally different from the England of the Middle Ages. From being largely an agricultural nation with small

- 1: Anno 1643, Statute 20. Scobell Pt.I. p.57.  
 2: Anno, 1656. Statute 8. Scobell, Pt.II. p. 384.  
     In 1656 Spanish Wines were increased from 1/2 to 1/6 a quart: French wines reduced from 8d to 7d a quart.  
 3: Anno 1656. Statute 5. Scobell Pt.II. p. 376.  
 4. Anno 1649. Statute 77. And again in Statute 9 (1656) Scobell Pt.II. P. 384.

industries sufficient for the home trade, it was becoming increasingly a nation of manufacturers and merchants who looked for trade with the larger world outside. And the question simply put was, can a man do what he likes with his own? Can the landowner produce wool, and thus turn adrift a large number of farm labourers, or must he feel morally responsible for their welfare? Can merchants buy up produce until they possess a monopoly of it, and then re-sell at their own terms, or export to their own advantage? Can manufacturers buy both raw material and labour as cheaply as possible, and sell the manufactured article at as high a price as they can get, and make it of a quality of material that shall give them the greatest monetary return? Shall those who have money to lend to needy but enterprising merchants, get as much out of the accommodation as they can, or gladly lend it and take the risk, for a bare return of the principal? In other words shall business men exercise their vocation with a paternal interest in the welfare of the community, or shall they pursue a policy of laissez-faire?

Traditional teaching which had been taken over by the Anglican Church from Rome was on the side of the former attitude. Self-interest had always been, and still was on the latter side. And with the greater opportunities of making wealth, the temptation to drive a hard bargain increased.

As we have seen, the policy of the government was to pursue a via media. And one can't help feeling that they adopted the wisest plan. Incentives to business in the form of profits are the only incentives that appeal to most men. In a more ideal state it is conceivable that the 'common good' might be a sufficient and certainly loftier motive to strenuous endeavour and enterprise. But under the circumstances the successive governments, by permitting profits and yet endeavouring to prevent extortion or profiteering, legislated wisely.

The Divines of the Anglican church however seem to have been more conservative of traditional ideas on business morality than were the governments. This was natural not merely because they were the guardians of the church tradition, but also because usury or extortion must ever be "a vyce most odyous and detestable" to men of moral ideals. And to such men the concessions allowed by government to men of self interest must have seemed like the insertion of the thin end of the wedge that threatened to overthrow the moral and religious government of the desires of man.

That this opposition was real and wide-spread seems evident from the treatise of John Blaxton, published in 1634, in which he gives a list of six Bishops and ten Doctors of Divinity, besides numberless humbler clergy, who during the previous hundred years had written on different

aspects of the sin of extortion.<sup>1</sup> Blaxton was himself a Divine, and his opinion about the matter was that, "Every man is to his neighbour a debtor, not onely of that which himself borroweth, but of whatsoever his neighbour needeth:... not onely to pay that hee oweth, but also to lend that hee hath and may conveniently spare.....looking for nothing thereby".<sup>2</sup>

As an ideal this was splendid; as a business transaction it was too unprofitable and too risky. As Thomas Wilson said, "What man is so madde (eager) to deliver his money out of his owne possession for naughte, or whoe is he that will not make of his owne the best he can?"<sup>3</sup>

An earlier Divine, Miles Mosse, published six sermons in 1595 under the title, "The Arraignment and Conviction of Vsurie".<sup>4</sup> Like Blaxton he does not sanction interest on loans. Usury he defines as "an ouerplus or gaine taken more than was lent".<sup>5</sup> "Who in lending", he says, "couenanteth for gaine.....is such an vsurer as is condemned by the word of God".<sup>6</sup> He would have men to lend for love.

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- 1: John Blaxton, "The English Usurer" (1634) pp.9-44  
 2: Ibid. p.11  
 3: Vide Supra, p. 392.  
 4: A Summary of this work is given in "Tudor Economic Documents", Vol.III. pp.377-387. (Ed. R.H. Tawney & Eileen Power, 1924).  
 5: Ibid. p. 379.  
 6: Ibid. p. 387.

He says there are three things the lender may hope to expect from the borrower: that the borrower shall "repay the aequal measure or value of that which he lent him"; that the lender may sue the borrower if the principal is not repaid; that the lender may expect "personal relief in his own time of need" from the borrower whom he has obliged. And Mosse adds a fourth expectation - ~~the~~ love and good-will of the borrower<sup>1</sup>. Strangely enough this Divine does allow interest under a certain condition - viz, if the capital is not repaid on the appointed day. But this to Mosse is not usury, but a recompense ~~for~~ not being paid back the principal when due.<sup>2</sup>

And this seems to have been the general attitude of the Anglican clergy at least throughout the Elizabethan period.

In Archdeacon Mullin's "Articles of Visitation", issued in 1585, uncharitable persons and usurers are classed along with drunkards, swearers, ribalds, and sorcerers. One Article asks, "Whether you do know that within your parish there is (or are) any person or persons notoriously known or suspected by probable tokens or common fame to be an usurer; or doth offend by any colour or means directly or

1: A summary of this work is given in "Tudor Economic Documents", Vol.II. (Ed. R.H.Tawney & Eileen Power, 1924) p. 386.

2: Ibid. p.379.

indirectly in the same".<sup>1</sup>

When we come to the reign of Charles I, however, we find Archbishop Laud leading the attack upon usury and all that was meant by that term. But while he is severe on extortioners, it is evident that it is extortioners and not law-abiding business-men who charge the legal rate of interest or expect just profits, whom he attacks.

"Both Commonwealth and Church", he wrote, "are collective bodies made up of many into one; and both so near allied that the one, the Church, can never subsist but in the other, the Commonwealth; nay, so near, that the same men, which in a temporal respect make the Commonwealth, do in a spiritual make the Church...."<sup>2</sup> And he goes on to say, "If any man be so addicted to his private, that he neglect the common State, he is void of the sense of piety, and wisheth Peace and happiness to himself in vain. For whoever he be he must live in the body of the Commonwealth, and in the body of the Church....."<sup>3</sup> In another sermon he says, "God will not bless the State, if Kings and Magistrates do not execute judgment; if the widow and the fatherless have

1: W.P.M. Kennedy, "Elizabethan Episcopal Administration", (1924) Vol.III. p.180.

2: "The Works of William Laud, D.D." (Ed. W. Scott, 1847) Vol.I. p. 6. (A sermon on James I's birthday).

3: Ibid. pp. 28-29.



cause to cry out against the thrones of justice".<sup>1</sup>

It was natural perhaps that the High-Church Archbishop who was one of the King's chief advisers, and had a seat on the council, and on the commission for the relief of the poor, should adopt the attitude of the government on business morality. It was justice he demanded. But his idea of justice was not that expressed by Blaxton or Miles Mosse, both of whom set their faces against interest on loans, but the justice which was allowed by law. Laud was merely opposed to extortion - "grinding the face of the poor"; and it was because he was against this that he valued his position on the Council. "A Bishop", he wrote, "may preach the gospel more publicly, and go to far greater edification in a Court of Judicature or at a Council-table, where great men are met together to draw things to an issue, than many preachers in their several charges can".<sup>2</sup>

What Laud is referring to is the work of the Council in regulating business practices and correcting abuses. In 1630, for instance, it ordered the Justices of the five Midland Counties to remove all inclosures made within the last five years: and in 1633, 1635, and 1636 three separate Commissions were appointed to deal with this matter which had fallen heavily upon the poor whose common land had

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1: Ibid. p.64 (A Sermon before parliament Feby.6th 1625)  
 2: "Works of Laud", Vol. VI. p.191 (Ed. J. Bliss, 1857)

been enclosed in large estates. In places, land turned into pasturage was ploughed up by Government order, and between 1635 and 1638, fines amounting to £50,000 were imposed on some six hundred offenders.<sup>1</sup>

When we turn to the Puritans it is difficult to see any real difference between their practices and the theories of the government and of men like Dr. Thomas Wilson and Archbishop Laud. The government and such men as Wilson and Laud had, as we have tried to shew, broken away from the traditional notion that business should be run on socialistic lines - money lent without interest; farms be worked merely for the common good of the dwellers on the soil, etc. They had caught the new spirit which had been awakened by the wider outlook which came with the opportunities for world trade. And if England was to share in that business, then incentives to enterprise must not be taken away by forbidding those who could materially help by the loan of money, to undertake such risks without reward; nor must farmers and business-men be handicapped by the rules of mediaeval times - trade-guilds, etc. All that the government desired was to prevent gross abuses that fell heavily upon the poor, and made them poorer and destitute. In this, of course, the government and Laud

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1: Vide E.O.K. Gonner, "Common Lands and Inclosure", (1912) pp. 166-167.

shew themselves to be in advance of, or out of harmony with, many of the Elizabethan divines.

Their position, however, is practically identical with that occupied by the puritans. The latter, perhaps ever since their sojourn in Geneva, had granted the right of reasonable interest on loans and profits on business transactions. But they were strongly averse to extortion. Peter Baro, who lost his professorship at Cambridge because of his puritan sympathies, had no patience with those who "sitting idle at home, make merchandise only of their money, by giving it out in this sort to needy persons.....without having any regard of his commodity to whom they give it, but only of their own gain".<sup>1</sup> What Baro meant was that, if the borrower failed in his undertaking, the lender should not add to his failure by demanding back more than the principal. If he was successful, then the lender might justly expect to share in the prosperity his loan had helped to achieve. Baro was not averse to interest. "It is plaine and evident", he said in the same sermon, "that all gaine, which is gotten by money, is not to be condemned, yet a godly man must take diligent heed sith there

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1: Haweis, "Sketches of the Reformation", (1844)  
pp. 237-246.

is also so great and many abuses of money, lest he abuse his moneye to the hurt of his neighbour".<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Cartwright, the presbyterian champion, was also against oppressive usury, but not against interest on principle. He wrote: "He that hath usurie proved against him, so that he lose his principal for taking above ten in the hundred, yet shall he also, for committing so hainous offence against God and his Church, to the very ill example of others, not be allowed to the Sacraments, until he shewe himselfe repentaunt for the faulte and study thereby to satisfie the congregation so offended by him".<sup>2</sup> Ten per cent was the legal interest in Elizabeth's reign.<sup>3</sup>

Phillip Stubbes in his remarkable work on the abuses in England said: "Euery Christen Man is bound, in conscience before God, to prouide for his houshold & Family, but yet so as his immoderate care surpasse not the bands, nor yet transcend the limits, of true Godlynes.....So farre from couetousnes, & from immoderate care, wold the Lord haue vs, that we ought not this day to 'care for tomorrow, for (sayeth He) sufficient to the day is the trauail of the same".<sup>4</sup> But Stubbes has much

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1: Vide also Cunningham, "English Industry & Commerce"  
Vol. II. Pt. I. pp. 157-158.

2: Vide "Puritan Manifestoes" (Ed. Frere & Douglas) p. 120

3: Ibid, Supra, p. 374.

4: Phillip Stubbes, "Anatomy of the Abuses in England",  
(1583)(Ed. F. J. Furnivall) pp. 115-116. Vol. I.

to say of the practices of business-men which fall far short of his ideal. He speaks of those who buy up goods for export as "traitors to God, their prince and country", because "all things are dearer, and scarcer, than otherwise they would be if restraint were had, and I warrant them many a blacke curse haue they of the poore commons for their doing".<sup>1</sup> And he tells the old story of "counterfeit ballances.....adulterate measures, and what not, to deceiue the poore.....and to take in money". And he said, "If a thinge cost them ten shillings, they will not blush to aske twentie shillings for it....."<sup>2</sup>

And Bunyan, a puritan of the puritans, has nothing but condemnation to utter against extortioners and usurers. Among the sins of Mr Badman were these two. He was "sure to impose upon (his customers) his worst, even very bad comodity, yet set down for it the price that the best was sold at;.....He would sell goods that cost him not the best price by far, for as much as he sold the best of all for"<sup>3</sup> "Extortion is a screwing from men more than by the Law of God or men is right".<sup>4</sup> Usurers are "Hucksters, that buy up the poor man's victuals by whole-sale, and sell it to him

1: Ibid. Vol. II. p.22

2: Ibid. Vol. II. p.23

3: Bunyan, "Life & Death of Mr Badman". (Cambridge English Classics) 1905, p.114

4: Ibid. p.115

again for unreasonable gains, by retale.....";<sup>1</sup>  
 and "Pawn-Brokers, that lend money and goods to poor people,  
 .....and will make, by one trick or other, the Interest  
 of what they so lend, amount to thirty, forty, yea  
 sometimes fifty pounds by the year....."<sup>2</sup> And Bunyan's  
 comment on these matters is; "He that will.....sell his  
 commodity as dear as he can, must sometimes make a prey  
 of the ignorance of his chapman; but that he cannot doe  
 with a good conscience.....He that will.....sell his  
 commodity as dear, or for as much as he can, must, if heed  
 be, make a prey of his neighbours fondness (i.e. foolish-  
 ness); but that a man cannot doe with a good conscience..  
 .....The same also may be said for buying; no man may  
 always buy as cheap as he can, but must also use good  
 conscience in buying; The which he can by no means use  
 and keep, if he buyes always as cheap as he can....."<sup>3</sup>  
 Bunyan's guide to a 'good conscience' in these matters  
 is the Hebrew Commandment, "If thou sell ought unto thy  
 neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour, ye shall not  
 oppress one another". (Leviticus 25<sup>14</sup>)<sup>4</sup>

And William Ames, whose work, "De Conscientia", was the  
 most outstanding and influential treatise on social ethics

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- 1: "Bunyan" Ibid. p.116
- 2: Ibid. p.117
- 3: Ibid. pp.118-119
- 4: Ibid. p.122

in that period, denied the Anglican claim that interest was forbidden in principle either by the Bible or natural reason. He saw no reason why any distinction should be made between capital invested in land and capital invested in business.

Ames, however, qualified his concessions to interest by demanding that no interest should be charged on loans to the needy. And rather than a fixed rate of interest, he advised the lender to share in the risks of the borrower. If the enterprise turned out well, let him demand a reasonable return for the loan. If it turned out ill, let him ask for a smaller interest, or be content with the bare return of the capital. In fixing the rate of interest, the lender should be guided, "according to the degree in which God has blessed him by whom the money is used". With regard to buying and selling, he says, "To wish to buy cheap and sell dear is common (as Augustine observes) but it is a common vice". And he advises that men should sell according to the fixed prices, though they may sell below, because the price is fixed for the benefit of the buyer. If there is no fixed price, then they must follow the market price and the judgment of prudent and good men. They must not take advantage of men's necessities to raise the prices.<sup>1</sup>

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1: "De Conscientia", (Amsterdam, 1654) pp.400-404.

And Oliver Cromwell's attitude to that usury, which means extortion, may be seen in his letter to Lenthall, after the victory at Dunbar, dated September 4th, 1650. "Be pleased", he writes, "to reform the abuses of all professions:- and if there be any one that makes many poor to make a few rich, that suits not a Commonwealth. If He that strengthens your servants to fight please to give you hearts to set upon these things.....you shall shine forth to other Nations, who shall emulate the glory of such a pattern.....".<sup>1</sup>

In spite of this similarity between the Anglicans and Puritans, a similarity which, in the matter of charitable dealings, amounted practically to identity, there was however a difference in teaching and outlook. The puritans didnot sanction interest on money or profits in business, merely as a concession to human weakness, but as a right. They did not take their stand with the Act of Edward VI which said that "usurie is by the worde of God utterly prohibited, as a vyce moste odyous and detestable",<sup>2</sup> but with the teaching of Geneva. The former was the Roman and largely the Anglican tradition, but the Puritans' oracles of infallibility were uttered from Geneva and not from Rome. Calvin had no more sympathy with extortion-

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1: "Cromwell's Letters & Speeches". (Chelsea edition)  
part V. p.193.

2: Vide supra pp. 292-293.



ate practices than Rome had. He would have men seek the good of others as well as their own good. "How difficult it is", he says, "to perform the duty of seeking the good of our neighbour! Unless you leave off all thought of yourself, and in a manner cease to be yourself, you will never accomplish it.....nature.....so inclines us to love ourselves only, that she will not easily allow us carelessly to pass by ourselves and our own interests that we may watch over the interests of others....." But he goes on to say: "No member has its function for itself, or applies it for its own private use, but transfers it to its fellow-members; nor does it derive any other advantage from it than that which it receives in common with the whole body. Thus, whatever the pious man can do, he is bound to do for his brethren, not consulting his own interest in any other way than by striving earnestly for the common edification of the church.....In this way, we shall not only unite the study of our neighbour's advantage with a regard to our own, but make the latter subordinate to the former".<sup>1</sup>

And the Consistory at Geneva punished harsh creditors, usurers, engrossers and monopolists, reprimanded or fined merchants who defrauded their clients, clothmakers

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1: Calvin, Institutes, Book III. Cap. 7 par. 5  
 (Translation by H. Beveridge, 1845, Vol. II.  
 pp. 265-266.

whose stuff was an inch too narrow, dealers who gave short weight, butchers who sold meat above the fixed price, and doctors who charged excessive fees.<sup>1</sup> That Calvin did not grant the right to use one's money as one might wish to do, can be seen also in the successive opposition of the ministers of Geneva to a financial concern in the city. It was no doubt due to Calvin's opinions on economics that Geneva became a financial centre of importance after the fall of Lyons during the French wars of religion. A Bank was opened in the city which carried on an exchange business, and advanced loans at ten to twelve per cent interest. Instead of prohibiting this business, Calvin and the Council of Ministers, consented to its formation.

Ten years later, however, the ministers successfully opposed a motion to commence a second Bank. But the ground of their objection was not aversion to lending money at interest, but to making a business of it. If, for instance, the borrower used the loan in some legitimate enterprise, then it was right that he should pay for the loan. But if the borrower was a needy person who wanted money to tide him over a difficulty, then to exact interest on the loan, merely added to his burden. Bankers, however, did not make

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1: Vide Tawney, "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism".  
p.119.

these fine moral distinctions. But the temptation to make money by lending money, irrespective of its employment, the ministers strongly condemned.<sup>1</sup>

Bullinger, another Genevan divine, adopted the same attitude. In his "Decades" he describes Usury as letting out "to hire unto another man upon a certain covenant of gain to return to thee for the use thereof. This bargain", he continues, "is not of itself unlawful, nor yet condemned in the holy Scriptures. And.....usury is not dishonest of itself: the abuse thereof hath made it dishonest.....For buying, setting to hire, and such like contracts are lawfully allowed us.....that is no usury, when the debtor giveth pension and some yearly fee, in recompence of the money which he hath borrowed....."<sup>2</sup>

While in theory there was a difference between the attitude of Calvinism and of Anglicanism on this matter of the making and use of money, in practice there was little or no difference. Anglicanism, as we have seen, was compelled by the logic of events to grant the taking of interest on loans. And its practical concern was to keep interest as low as possible, and to regulate business in such a way as to prevent extortion. The same thing was being done at Geneva. Whence then came the incentive to that policy of laissez faire

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2: Bullinger, "Decades", Vol.III. pp.40-41.

1: Vide R.H. Tawney, "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism" p.120.

of which the Puritans, who learnt their lessons largely in Geneva, have been accused?

So early as 1540 Cranmer wrote to Oziander protesting against the embarrassment caused to the reformers in England by the indulgence to moral laxity in the matter of economic transactions which were said to have been given by reformers in Germany.<sup>1</sup> All that Cranmer meant was that the Genevan principle conceded what Anglicanism wished to deny - that the traditional or Roman teaching on Usury was not binding. And one can see from this letter that before the exiles of Frankfort sojourned in Geneva, the evil of which the Puritans were accused was infecting men's minds in England.

In 1612 however the indictment of Puritanism is made more explicitly. Roger Fenton in his treatise says:

"Had it not been for those banished men, who in time of persecution fled into other parts for succour, this doctrine against vsurie had never been called into question. But these exiles bringing stocks of money with them, and wanting skill to employ it.....,their money was vsed by others who had skill, and some allowance made to them for the vse. This practice growing both common and publike, it remained

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1: Vide Gardiner, "Letters and Papers of Henry VIII".  
Vol. XVI. No. 357.

then that the wit of man.....must trie what it could doe,  
 if not directly to defend, yet somewhat to qualifie the  
 matter.....I finde that these Diuines deale with vsurie  
 as the Apothecarie doth with poyson, working and tempering  
 it with so many cautions and limitations, that in the end  
 they make it no vsurie at all".<sup>1</sup>

And among other writers who had no high regard for  
 puritan business methods may be mentioned Dr Thomas Wilson,  
 who, as we have seen, was not against the taking of interest  
 on loans. Nevertheless he evidently had the puritans in  
 mind when he wrote: "There bee two sortes of men that  
 are alwayes to bee looked upon very narrowly, the one is  
 the dissemblinge gospeller, and the other is the wilfull  
 and indurate papiste. The first under colour of religion  
 overthroweth all religion, and bearing good men in hande  
 that he loveth playnesse, useth covertelie all deceypte  
 that maye bee, and for pryvate gayne undoeth the common  
 welfare of man. And touching thys sinne of usurie, none  
 doe more openly offende in thys behalfe than do these  
 counterfeite professors of thys pure religion."<sup>2</sup>

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- 1: Roger Fenton, "A Treatise of Usurie", (1612) pp. 60-61.  
 2: Thomas Wilson, "A Discourse upon Usury", (Ed. R.H.  
 Tawney, 1925). p.178.

That some puritans during the Interregnum, and afterward, did make a 'good thing' of business, is evident.

Richard Baxter, the Puritan Divine, tells us of a friend, Thomas Foley - presumably a good Puritan - "who from almost nothing did get about £5,000 per annum or more by Iron Works; and that with so Just and blameless Dealing that all men that ever he had to do with, that ever I heard of, magnified his great integrity and honesty, which was questioned by none".<sup>1</sup> At that time Baxter's stipend at Kidderminster was between £80 and £90 a year! And Foley was only one of a great number of flourishing business-men and merchants, who, at that period, were making large fortunes in utter disregard of the ethics of business which obtained in the time of Edward VI.

T.S. Ashton gives a striking list of prosperous iron-masters in the early eighteenth century who were connected with the nonconformist bodies, and he comments thus: "In the great manufacturers of the eighteenth century the qualities of self-reliance, assertiveness, and adventurous enterprise were strongly developed; and the dignity and reticence of the service of the established church made small appeal to men of this type, whose ardent spirit called for more individualism, more spontaneity -

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1: Vide F.J. Powicke, "Life of Richard Baxter", p.158.

one might almost say more venturesomeness - in public worship".<sup>1</sup>

"The Interregnum and the Restoration period", says Cunningham, "approached more nearly to laissez faire conditions than had ever been deemed wise before".<sup>2</sup>

And something of this policy is seen in the Speaker of the House of Commons, Lenthall, who amassed a large fortune by doubtful if not dishonest means. Walker tells us that Cromwell had threatened to impeach the Speaker of corrupt practices, and he gives the ten articles of impeachment, but Cromwell was diverted from this intention by a gift of £1,500 for his expenses in his Expedition to Scotland.<sup>3</sup>

The corruption of the government is further seen in the case of Sir Ralph Verney whose estates were under sequestration.<sup>4</sup> Not being permitted to plead his own cause because he had refused to take the Covenant, it was suggested that his wife, Lady Verney, should undertake the matter. But to get anything moving on her husband's behalf in the government was impossible without bribes. In November 1647 she wrote to her husband: "Now I am here" (in London with

- 1: T.S. Ashton, "Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution", pp.211-212.
- 2: W. Cunningham, "The Growth of English Industry and Commerce", (1912) Vol.II. Pt.I. p.205.
- 3: Clement Walker, "Relations and Observations, Historical & Political", (History of Independency) Part II. pp.211-212.
- 4: Gardiner, "The Great Civil War", Vol.III. p.211.

the object of getting into touch with the government) I cannot imagine what course to take; for everybody tells me that there is no hope of doing anything in the House of Commons but by bribery, and where I shall get the money I vow I know not".<sup>1</sup> Dr Denton, Sir Ralph's uncle, moreover, informed Verney that he had already promised £40 to one minister in order to get Sir Ralph's petition considered, and that he intended approaching his cousin, the wife of Speaker Lenthall's brother, but felt he would need to offer her £50<sup>2</sup>. Gardiner says "The Speaker's indirect gains are reckoned by a hostile witness at £20,000 a year".<sup>3</sup>

It is to the same matter that Milton refers in his "History of Britain" when he says: "But when once the superficial zeal and popular fumes that acted their New magistracy were cooled, and spent in them, strait every one betook himself (setting the commonwealth behind, his private ends before) to do as his own profit or ambition led him. Then was justice delayed, and soon after denied: spight and favour determined all;.....every where wrong and oppression:..... Some.....fell to huckster the commonwealth. Others did....as men could soothe and humour them best; so he who would give most, or, under covert of hypocritical zeal, insinuate basest, enjoyed unworthily the rewards of learning and

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- 1: Gardiner. Ibid. Vol. IV. p.76  
 2: Ibid. Vol.IV. pp. 76-77  
 3: Ibid. Vol.IV. p. 77. footnote.



fidelity, or escaped the punishment of his crimes and misdeeds.....Not to reckon the offices, gifts, and preferments bestowed and shared among themselves: they in the mean while, who were ever faithfullest to this cause, and freely aided them in person, or with their substance,.....(were) slighted and bereaved after of their just debts by greedy sequestrations.....Thus were their friends confiscate with their enemies, while they forfeited their debtors to the state, as they called it, but indeed to the ravening seizure of innumerable thieves in office....."<sup>1</sup>

These are dark stains on the character of the leaders of the Long Parliament, whose interest in the freedom of politics and religion, and whose zeal for moral reformation would appear to be so real and strong. Was there in puritanism anything that could sanction such conduct, or could puritanism and such practices exist comfortably together? Milton, at any rate, could not reconcile this mode of life with the puritan ideals he himself cherished. "Between them the teachers (presbyterian Divines) and these the disciples (politicians), there hath not been a more ignominious and mortal wound to faith, to piety, to the work of reformation, nor more cause of blaspheming given to the enemies of God and truth, since the first preaching

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1: "History of Britain", Book III. pp. 236-237. Milton's Prose Works (Ed. Bohn) Vol. V.

of reformation",<sup>1</sup> was Milton's conviction.

It was not Calvin's allowance of reasonable interest and profits, however, which alone brought about this puritan eagerness to make money and succeed in business. That may have been the first step - the granting that interest and profits are reasonable and justified. But the incentive came from other teachings of Calvin and the Genevan school. It was an article of Calvin's Creed, for instance, that "it is plainly owing to the mere pleasure of God that salvation is spontaneously offered to some, while others have no access to it.....that our salvation flows from the free mercy of God as its fountain.....that God saves whom he wills of his mere good pleasure, and does not pay a debt, a debt which never can be due....."<sup>2</sup> Later Calvin says, ".....God when he created man foresaw everything that was to happen to him.....some are pre-ordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation."<sup>3</sup>

There was something dangerous in such a creed. For since man's election to eternal happiness or woe was determined not by man's merit, but by an a-moral principle in God, therefore man's actions, it might be argued, were indifferent to

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1: "History of Britain", Ibid. p.239.

2: Institutes, Bk.III. Cap.XXI. par.1 (Beveridge, Vol.II. pp.529-30)

3: Ibid. Cap. XXI. par. 4-5. (Beveridge, Vol.II. pp.533-534)

the eternal and a man might do what he wished. It is one of the surprises of Calvinism and of puritanism that with such a creed they were so zealous about the moral life. Of course they were saved from a 'go-as-you-please' policy in morals by their view of the Scriptures. Therein was the will of God for man. And if theologically they maintained that salvation was independent of man's merit, they also maintained that the kind of life a man lived was tremendously important, since God had made known His will on this matter in the Scriptures.

The Scriptures, however, not only condemned dishonest and unbrotherly practices, but they condemned idleness too. And it would seem that such texts as, "Why stand ye here all the day idle";<sup>1</sup> "If any would not work neither should he eat"<sup>2</sup>, were positive commands to industry which strongly appealed to the puritan soul. And it is a fact that in the moral legislation of the puritans from 1640 to 1660, the sins condemned were the sins of the flesh rather than the sins of the spirit. Drunkenness, swearing, immorality, pastimes, theatres and Sabbath-breaking, together with blasphemy which might be termed a sin of the spirit, were the vices which chiefly concerned them. Meanness and selfishness, of course, cannot be regulated

1: Matthew's Gospel. XX.6.

2: II. Thessalonians, III. 10.

by acts of parliament, so easily as the sins of the flesh. But even when these sins manifested themselves in extortion and oppression, - "grinding the face of the poor" - they were left to preachers to receive their condemnation rather than attacked by statute.

It is true that Puritan preachers and teachers were far from indifferent to such sins as meanness, self-seeking and oppression. Bunyan's attitude was typical<sup>1</sup>. But on the other hand they placed such emphasis on certain other necessary duties of the christian man, as tended to render void almost their condemnation of self-interested conduct. In order to satisfy the law of God, or the demands of Scripture, it was made to appear of the first importance that a man should avoid the sins of the flesh, observe the Sabbath, and not trifle with God-given time. And since Satan finds some evil for idle hands to do, it became a virtue to be industrious. If idleness was not a sin in itself, it was an opening of the gate to temptation and sin. And therefore idleness tended to be condemned as a sin, and industry to be lauded as a virtue. The danger in such a notion is at once evident, unless the self-regarding instinct can be sublimated or modified by the altruistic instinct. An encouragement is

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1: Vide Supra, pp. 403-404.

given to self-seeking; and success in business, however obtained, becomes a divine virtue. Moreover there were other things in the puritan theology and outlook which ministered to the self-regarding instinct. Even so orthodox a puritan as Bunyan makes it very plain that if a man would save his soul, he must, like "Christian", be prepared to forsake wife and children if needs be, and seek out the straight path through the "wicket-gate", fighting temptations and disregarding all allurements from the narrow way. In other words, salvation is an individual affair, and to win it a man must not consider even his duty to wife and children. His salvation is more important than their creature comforts and their social well-being. Puritanism was an individualistic creed. It had always been that. The puritans fight for liberty in religion and politics was prompted by a belief in the value of the individual. The collective body - the state - might be disintegrated by civil war, but what was that, so long as the individual obtained his rights? And the Puritans' success in this struggle merely confirmed their belief in individualism.

With this individualistic or self-interested attitude towards life, it is not surprising that many Puritan businessmen forged ahead on the Capitalist path, in view of the encouragement they received in the latter part of the Inter-

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regnum. But besides their English teachers they had also the support of Geneva. Tawney says that Calvin "condemned indiscriminate alms-giving as vehemently as any Utilitarian, and urged that the ecclesiastical authorities should regularly visit every family to ascertain whether its members were idle, drunken or otherwise undesirable".<sup>1</sup>

Among English writers who condemned idleness might be mentioned John Flavell,<sup>2</sup> Richard Steele<sup>3</sup> and Richard Baxter.<sup>4</sup> The Rev. Richard Steele (1629-1692) said, "God doth call every man and woman.....to serve Him in some peculiar employment in this world, both for their own and the common good. It is not enough to be doing something sometimes, for no man is so idle, but that he is sometimes doing: but a calling is some constant business that fills a man's time. The great Governor of the world hath appointed to every man his proper post and province, and let him be ever so active out of his sphere, he will be at a great loss, if he do not keep his own vineyard and mind his own business."<sup>5</sup>

This idea of a "calling" so permeated Puritan thinking that hard work came to occupy one of the chief places among the list of virtues. Here is Steele's comparison between

- 1: "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism", p.144.
- 2: cp. "Husbandry spiritualized, or the Heavenly Use of Earthly Things". (1669)
- 3: "The Tradesman's calling", 1684.
- 4: Vide infra, p.422.
- 5: Steele, "A Tradesman's Calling", pp. 1 & 4.

work and worship: "Perhaps they are very diligent in reading and hearing, in prayer and fasting, and do run from one sermon to another.....but do nothing in any particular calling..... as they ought to do. These people live as if they were all soul and no body.....If some of their ancestors had taken no more care of them, than they do for posterity, they must have failed out of necessity, instead of fasting out of choice..... if any, (let them be who or what they will) will not work, they should not eat".<sup>1</sup>

And again, "The begging Friars and such Monks as live only to themselves and to their formal devotions, but do employ themselves in no one thing to further their own subsistence or the good of mankind.....have the confidence to boast of this their course as a state of perfection, which in very deed, as to the worthiness of it, falls short of the poorest cobbler, for his is a calling of God, and theirs is none".<sup>2</sup>

And Steele insists that it "is evident from the light of nature, of Scripture, and of reason, that every man should employ himself in a calling".<sup>3</sup> Even to the rich, he says, work is necessary "in respect of your soul, to prevent the corruptions that are apt to breed there. The standing pool is prone to putrifaction; and it were better to beat down the body and keep it in subjection by a laborious calling, than

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1: Steele Ibid. p.8  
 2: Steele. Ibid. pp.21-22  
 3: Steele. Ibid. p.20.

through luxury to become a castaway".<sup>1</sup> And likening lazy Christians to the Leviathan of the sea, "as if made only to play therein", he asks, "What account can you give at night to your own consciences? What account can you give at last unto the great God? He that hath lent you talents, hath also said, occupy till I come.....Do not render yourselves useless, lest ye be dealt with like unsavoury salt, which being good for nothing, is cast out and trodden under the foot of men".<sup>2</sup>

Baxter in his "Christian Directory" takes up a similar attitude. "Every one that is able, rich or poor, must live in some profitable course of pains or labour".<sup>3</sup> "Live not in idleness or sloth, but be laborious in your callings that you may escape that need or poverty which is the temptation to the sin of theft". Idleness is a crime which is not to be tolerated in Christian societies.<sup>4</sup> The rich must labour as constantly as the poor though not in the same kind of work....." You have the same Law and Master, and have no more liberty to indulge your lusts.....Gentlemen think that their riches allow them to live without profitable labour, and to gratify their flesh and fare deliciously every day: as if it were their privilege to be sensual and to be damned!"<sup>5</sup>

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1: Steele, "A Tradesman's Calling", p.20.

2: Steele. Ibid. p.23.

3: Jeannette Tawney, "Chapters from a Christian Directory", p.169.

4: Jeanette Tawney. Ibid. p.64

5: Jeanette Tawney. Ibid. p.54



"Idleness also and negligence in our callings, is sinful wastefulness and prodigality. When either the pride of gentility maketh people think themselves too good to labour, or to look after the matters of their families, or slothfulness maketh them think it a life too toilsome for their flesh to bear - Proverbs, Chapter 18, verse 9 - 'He that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster': These drones consume that which others labour for, but are not gatherers themselves".<sup>1</sup>

If puritan business-men forged ahead along the capitalist path and, in many instances, manifested a greater zeal for profits than for God's glory, it was but natural under the circumstances. They had been weaned away from the traditional economic theory, and encouraged, by the sanctions of the puritan church, to regard interest on capital, and profits on business transactions, as lawful and right. Moreover, they were taught that labour was not a punishment for the sin of Adam, but a divine 'calling'.

It was not unnatural, therefore, that poverty and failure in business should come to be regarded, if not as sin, at least as a sign of sin. It meant that such people had not laboured in their "calling" with that foresight, prudence and application, which the Creator desired.

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1: Jeanette Tawney, Ibid. p.169.

There was a halo of ethical sanctification about success,<sup>1</sup> says Tawney. It was an evidence of a man's faithfulness in the few things over which God had placed him.

Steele remarks, "God hath given to man reason for this use, that he should first consider, then choose, then put in execution: and it is a preposterous and brutish thing to fix or fall upon any weighty business, such as a calling or condition of life, without a careful pondering of it in the balance of sound reason". And he goes on, "If God shew you a way in which you may lawfully get more than in another way, (without wrong to your soul or to any other), if you refuse this, and choose the less gainful way, you cross one of the ends of your calling, and you refuse to be God's steward".<sup>2</sup>

Such teaching, however, was not intended to be an incentive to get rich, since the rich equally with the poor, are instructed to labour in some calling.<sup>3</sup> But it arose out of the puritan religious and theological belief that labour was of Divine appointment, and a necessary discipline for the soul. No encouragement was given to economic licence; the ends in view were sternly moral. "Prudence and piety",

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- 1: Vide Tawney, "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism", p. 240.  
 2: Steele, "Tradesman's Calling", pp. 35 f.  
 3: Vide Supra, pp. 329-330.

says Steele, "were always very good friends. He that ~~was~~ innocence itself, commended a serpent's eye in a dove's head: "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves". Doves, not to hurt or wrong others: serpents, not to be hurt or wronged by others".<sup>1</sup>

And these are the motives Steele sets before the prudent business-man:

- 1: "The Glory of God.....as every pin and nail in the building, how obscure soever, concurs to the beauty and strength of the work, and consequently to the credit of the workman, even so every calling, how mean soever it is, contributes to the honour of the great householder, the maker of heaven and earth.....Keep therefore the honour of God in your eye.....'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God'".
- 2: "The second thing ye should aim at is the common good.... their eye is fixt upon a livelihood for themselves, let the public sink or swim. But this temper results from the depravation of our nature..... my business and ambition should be.....to be an useful member of the country that nourisheth me, to promote the good of mankind, than only or chiefly to build my nest on high and load myself with thick clay".
- 3: "You may and ought.....to aim at your own good, temporal, spiritual and eternal. You may aim at a comfortable and plentiful provision.....not thereby the more to satisfy your appetite, not to gratify an ambitious humour, but that you may do the more good, not only to your friends, but to God's friends, the poor".<sup>2</sup>

1: Steele, "A Tradesman's Calling". p.52  
 2: Steele, Ibid. pp.39-40.

Steele is also careful to point out that the tradesman must not "build his gain on other's ruins, nor purchase his private advantage with prejudice to the public".<sup>1</sup> And he reproves the "carnal policy of ungodly tradesmen, who, resolving to be rich, will compass their ends, though it be by the undoing of others, and of their own souls: that have the subtilty of the serpent without the innocence of the dove".<sup>2</sup>

Two things seem evident from a perusal of Steele's book. While in the first place he urges men and women to be industrious, and would have them to believe that this is the will of God; in the second place he seems to be trying to curb the industry of some who by their industry are "resolving to be rich", and no doubt becoming rich. Steele would like to find the via media, and lead men to walk therein. But the middle way was difficult for men to discover, especially when they were incited by their teachers to believe that industry was a divine calling, and a virtue in itself; and when in addition they believed that their election to eternal life was not determined by their merits or conduct, such teaching could scarcely do other than minister to their self-seeking instinct, and urge them to forge ahead on the Capitalist path.

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1: Steele, Ibid. pp.81-82.  
 2: Ibid. p.74.

Moreover since life was portrayed as a stewardship of which every individual must in the final judgment give an account; and since the things to be avoided were the sins of the flesh chiefly, and among the things to be cherished were the ways in which one used the God-given opportunities of life; and since the world was regarded not as the sphere of God and goodness, but as a 'Vanity Fair', "a carcase that had neither life nor loveliness", a place of evil and under the curse of the law, can it be wondered at if men of such ideas made success in business not merely a desirable thing for its own sake, and for the wealth it brought, but also because it was a criterion of worthiness. Success was a proof in itself that a man had not wasted his talents or his time. And if in the building up of great industries these eager business-men destroyed the beauty-spots of England with their factories and mines, polluting the air with smoke, and making ugly the towns with inartistic and crowded cottages, which are now slum areas, what did it matter since the world was a "City of Destruction" and under the curse.

And an incentive to spend ones strength in this way was also given indirectly by the puritan teaching which closed the door to the pleasures of life. To waste ones time in seeing plays, reading fiction, drinking, dancing and other games was wrong. But man must find an outlet for his

energies. And if these were not dissipated or wasted; if the only alternative to work was worship, then business must have become not only one's employment, but also one's pleasure and hobby.

And so it was largely with the puritans, who formed the bulk of the middle-classes engaged in commerce, and business. As H. G. Wood says, "The Puritan conception of stewardship, and the Puritan condemnation of worldly living, will be found to have contributed more to the morale of capitalism than either the love of gain or any conscious adaptation of a class to their place in the productive process".<sup>1</sup>

We cannot feel however that the teaching of the puritan divines, while it encouraged industry for its own sake, and as a safeguard from the temptations and sins of idleness, ever contemplated such a thing as Laissez faire in business. We find no sanction of this in Baxter or Steele. Like Bunyan, yes, and like Laud, the puritan divines condemned oppressive or extortionate practices. And that Cunningham is right in saying that "the triumph of puritanism swept away all traces of any restriction or guidance in the employment of money", must, it seems to us, be accepted with

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1: H. G. Wood, "The Influence of the Reformation on ideas concerning wealth". p.154.

qualifications. If he means that the puritan divines encouraged and sanctioned an immoral use of money, or an immoral making of money, Bunyan, Baxter and Steele stand as witnesses against him. But if he means that business-men accepted merely those sanctions of the puritan divines which suited them - the Genevan and puritan idea that usury is not wrong in principle, that man ought by the law of God to be industrious, that the world is a 'City of Destruction', and man must conquer it, and not be conquered by it - and disregarded other puritan teachings, as for example, that "The second thing ye should aim at is the common good..... my business and ambition should be.....to be an useful member of the Country that nourisheth me, to promote the good of mankind....."; then he is right. And that puritan business-men did take such a line of conduct after the Restoration may be gathered from Daniel Defoe's words. "Custom", he says, "has driven us beyond the limits of our morals in many things which trade makes necessary, and which we can now very rarely avoid; so that if we must pretend to go back to the literal sense of the command, if our yea must be yea, and our nay, nay, why, then, it is impossible for tradesmen to be christians, and we must unhinge all business, act upon new principles in trade, and so in many things, we must leave off living;.....All the ordinary communication

of life is now full of lying; and what with table-lies, salutation-lies, and trading-lies there is no such thing as every man speaking truth with his neighbour".<sup>1</sup>

It has to be admitted that the puritan idea that prosperity is a badge or proof of a virtuous life got such a hold on some men's minds that they became blind to the wrongs - individual and social - which may be caused by the pursuit of wealth. Even John Wesley in one of his sermons, not only approved of, but also encouraged the making of money. "Gain all you can", he said, "by common-sense, by using in your business all the understanding which God has given you. It is amazing to observe how few do this: how men run on in the same dull track with their forefathers. But whatever they do who know not God, this is no rule for you. It is a shame for a Christian not to improve upon them, in whatsoever he takes in hand. You should be continually learning from the experience of others or from your own experience, reading and reflection, to do everything you have to do better today than you did yesterday."<sup>2</sup>

This encouragement of industry, and this idea that success is a mark of a virtuous life, have undoubtedly been the cause of great wrongs to mankind which have been committed in the name of God. Men who were pillars of the

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1: Daniel Defoe, "The Complete English Tradesman", 1725.  
(Ed. 1841). Vol. I. p.184.

2: John Wesley, "Sermons". "On the use of Money".



church and who observed the puritan code of morals with severity, nevertheless employed men and women and children for long hours in their factories for a mere pittance. That they were wrong is an idea which never seemed to occur to them.

This legacy of puritanism, the baneful effects of which we are suffering from to-day in the class-hatreds which inhuman treatment in business have caused, was not however the direct product of puritanism as seen in the Elizabethan age. The purpose of those stalwart men was to secure a religious and moral government of the appetites and desires of man. And if the business-men of the latter part of the 17th century and onward claimed to be puritans, and believed they were, they certainly missed the real purpose of the founders of this movement and failed to catch their spirit.

One good thing however can be said for the zeal of the puritan business-man. He certainly tried to carry out the scriptural commands: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might", and "not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but with good-will, heartily as unto the Lord". His was not "shoddy" work, but of a nature that won its way into the markets of the world because of its excellence. British-goods came to bear by their very name

the hall-mark of genuineness. And this was a testimony not merely to the high quality of the goods, but also to the character of the workman. Puritanism in its attempt to dignify labour encouraged men to set before themselves the Apostolic injunction: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed".<sup>1</sup>

Stubbes had written in 1583 of English industrialists: "There are men of all sciences, trades, mysteries, faculties, occupations, and artes whatsoever, and that as cunning as any be vnder the sunne, yea, so expert they be,.....they were the brauest workmen in the world.....they seeke to excell and surpasse al other nations, in finenes of workmanship....."<sup>2</sup> And Milton in 1651, thinking of the same class of people wrote: "Others, whose ancestors were not noble, have taken a course to attain to true nobility by their own industry and virtue, and are not inferior to men of the noblest descent".<sup>3</sup>

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1: II. Timothy, II. 15

2: Phillip Stubbes, "Anatomy of the Abuses in England", 1583, (Ed. F.J. Furnivall) Vol. II. p.21.

3: "A Defence of the People of England", preface p.342 Prose Works, (Ed. Robert Fletcher, 1833).

## CHAPTER SIX.

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### CONCLUSION.

The puritan movement as we have seen occupied the stage of English history for just over a hundred years. During the Elizabethan age both the presbyterian and independent branches of the puritans were almost wholly concerned with religious matters working out and seeking to set up their respective programmes of church organisation and government. Their only interest in politics at that time was motivated by the desire to obtain legal recognition of their programmes. And it would seem that if this recognition had been given, the puritan divines would have contented themselves with the attempt to bring about what they conceived to be necessary reforms in the church. Indeed it is conceivable that had the Queen not taken up such a rigid attitude towards the established church - determined to enforce conformity to 'orders', ritual and liturgy - had she permitted the possibility of change in these matters, the puritan movement might have died out in her reign, or have become merely a reforming movement within, and not opposed to, the Anglican church. For there were many clergy within the episcopal church, besides those who were anxious to set up presbyterianism, and those who separated later from the church and formed the Independent bodies, who would have preferred to

purge the church of many of the matters which were offensive both to the presbyterian and independent puritans. Could this elasticity have been granted to Anglicanism, it is possible that Cartwright might never have drawn up his six propositions, that the 'Admonition' and the 'Explicatio' might not have appeared, and that the Independents might not have separated from the church. Anglicanism would of course have become a very different system from what we know it as being to-day. But compromises which might have made possible the comprehension of the scattered bodies of the Christian church in England would surely have been worth while.

Puritanism we feel was forced upon the English nation by the uncompromising attitude of Elizabeth, who either did not see the need of the moral and spiritual reforms which the puritans believed depended upon the fuller reformation they desired, or was indifferent to the moral and spiritual condition of the clergy and people, so long as they were law-abiding and conformable to her will.

This frustration of the puritans' reforming zeal was, it seems to us, a great mistake on the part of the Queen. For not only did she add to the difficulties of her reign by keeping alive and deepening the dissatisfaction and disaffection of a large number of her subjects, but she evoked that attitude of independence, and of resistance to

authority, which, stimulated and increased by the autocracy of the first two Stuarts, ended in the Civil War. The seeds of the Civil War were sown by Elizabeth.

But perhaps an even greater evil than the Civil War was the injury done to religion by this obstructive policy of the Queen. We have contended that but for Elizabeth there might have been a rapprochement between the episcopal party - many of whom favoured a fuller reformation - and the puritans. Had the two parties been permitted to debate their differences in Convocation, and been left free to make alterations consonant with common agreements, it is more than likely that a via media might have been discovered which would have prevented the crystallisation of those extreme opposite ideas which occasioned the literary conflict between Cartwright and Whitgift, and between the claims of the "Explicatio" put forth by Travers, and the contentions of Hooker in his "Ecclesiastical polity". Religious opinions became more sharply divided because of the queen's stern policy, and jealousies and hatred, largely due to misunderstandings and prejudices which might have been removed by conferences were awakened, and these have not disappeared altogether even in our day.

The depth of this bitterness between puritanism and anglicanism can be seen in the deplorable policy adopted by each party when it was in a position of political authority.

During the early years of the Long Parliament, when presbyterian Divines swayed the Westminster Assembly, Anglicanism, or it would be better to call it Episcopacy, was abolished root and branch. Many plausible arguments might of course be advanced to shew that the treatment meted out to the puritans by the Episcopal authorities during the eighty to ninety years that preceded this event, was such as merited no better fate. But even so, this action of the puritans not only revealed that they themselves could be as bitter and as prejudiced and as intolerant as their enemies, but it no doubt provoked the Episcopal party to retaliate in the same way when their opportunity came at the Restoration. The intention of the series of Acts passed between 1660 and 1673 - the Corporation Act, the Act of Uniformity, the Conventicle Act, the Five-mile Act and the Test Act - was to make it as near impossible as could be for people to worship in other than the Episcopal church, and to bar those who did not conform from employment by the state or municipality, and to close the doors of Oxford and Cambridge to their children.

The wrongs committed in these ways by each party in the name of religion have eaten deep into the very soul of the English people, and have prevented, and still prevent that inner consciousness of unity and solidarity which is

indispensable to the true greatness of a Nation. There is still a strong Anglican sentiment in England which in many things of vital importance, as, for instance, elementary school education, is opposed to, and opposed by, the non-conformist conscience. These two parties are opposite camps, and still jealous of each others power. We do not claim that conflicting ideas are to be deplored, or that it is ever possible to get all men to think alike; but we do claim that the most workable position, if not the highest truth, can only be attained when men of extreme opposite ideas can meet together in friendly relationships and endeavour to understand sympathetically each others point of view. The preclusion of this between Anglican and Puritan by Elizabeth has had disastrous consequences, and the old attitude still obtains largely in England today. Inhibited by the Queen from taking a share in the development of Anglicanism, the Puritans naturally became destructive rather than constructive critics of the established church. Minorities that are not allowed any voice in the management of affairs are apt to become merely critical, and to refuse through pique or prejudice to see anything good in the system upheld by their opponents. One can see this hardening process at work in the puritans. At Frankfort they merely made alterations in the Prayer-Book and ceremonies of Episcopacy, until driven by uncompromising

Anglicans, like Cox, to remove to Geneva and adopt the Genevan Order. In the early years of Elizabeth also they merely objected to certain ceremonies and vestments, and otherwise accepted the episcopal order and prayer-book. No doubt Cartwright and the Admonitionists had conscientious convictions about the unscriptural standing of bishops and church-government, when they expressed their mind in their respective theses. But when these were put forth there was no hint given that the whole order of Episcopacy was anathema to them. What they seemed to desire was a modification of Episcopacy which would allow of an Eldership or consistory in each church, and a government of the whole church by Synods or representative assemblies, with the addition of the discipline of church members. Virtually, of course, their proposals were a condemnation of episcopal government. But that a compromise would have been acceptable, seems evident from the suggestion in the Articles submitted to parliament in 1584, suggesting that when Bishops ordained ministers they should be assisted by at least six other ministers.<sup>1</sup> In other words ordination should be made by an eldership.

It is true that before this date the "Explicatio" and the "Directory" had been drawn up, but according to

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1: Vide supra, p.112.



Bancroft, it was not till after the year 1583 that an "Assembly or Councell being held.....certain decrees were made concerning the establishing and practice thereof....."<sup>1</sup> And it would seem that the abandoning of all hope of compromise with episcopacy was the reason for this determination to establish their own system in its entirety.

That the presbyterians should remain within the Anglican Church, considering their disapproval of its orders and ceremonies, instead of separating as did the Independents, was simply a matter of policy. It was their hope that, by steadily introducing their methods and practices into their respective churches they might bring about a gradual evolution from episcopacy to presbyterianism, and so achieve by steady work what they had failed to achieve by petitions to the Queen and Parliament. But we know how this method failed by the sheer opposition and persecution of the vigilant High-Commission, and the antipathy of Elizabeth, James and Charles to presbyteries. But so strongly were the presbyterians persuaded that they were right, and so determined were they to achieve their purpose, that when the opportunity came they made short work of disposing of episcopacy. More considerate

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1: "Dangerous Positions and Proceedings", p.69.  
Vide supra, p.106.

treatment by Elizabeth at the beginning might have averted all this. When we consider the alternative programmes to episcopacy put forward by the Presbyterians and Independents respectively, we cannot but admire the motive which prompted the puritans to seek the highest welfare of the church and religion, whether or not we agree with their suggestions for achieving this object. Their motive was to set up a church that should be ordered and governed on the lines of the apostolic church. And this they desired, as we have contended in Chapter II, not simply because there was virtue in a church that was modelled on scriptural or Apostolic lines, but also because it seemed to them that such a church was most likely to produce the ethical and spiritual life which the church was designed to foster. That episcopacy was wrong seemed evident by the failure of the Roman system. It's clergy had been utterly independent of the people in the church; an order apart, which in many things was above the Civil laws of the land; and an order which had enjoyed special privileges, occupied positions of power in State as well as Church; had grown wealthy, corrupt and often neglectful of their spiritual duties. And apart altogether from these evils Roman Episcopacy stood condemned because it had exalted the church at the expense of the scriptures. Salvation was assured to man if he were an obedient son of the church;

but this obedience did not demand of him necessarily an obedience to the Ethical ideals of Scripture. That there was a danger that English episcopacy might go the same way is evident from facts gleaned about the condition of the clergy so late as 1586.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand some of the puritans - perhaps the main body of the earliest reformers - had seen another system at work in Geneva, where the discipline exercised paid special attention to the moral life. And this was claimed to be the scriptural or apostolic church, newly discovered and set up.

Protestantism as we know took its stand on the authority of the Scriptures, as against the Romanist authority of the Church. And it is a remarkable thing that in England, during the reign of Elizabeth, the two branches of puritans, as well as the Episcopalians, believed in the authority of the Scriptures, and yet differed so much in their interpretation. The Presbyterians in their programme first pointed out the faults of Anglicanism in the "Admonitions", and then suggested the true way of bringing the Episcopal Church into line with the requirements of Scripture. Afterwards they published what they conceived

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1: Vide supra, p.150

to be the true Scriptural pattern of church government and discipline in the "Explicatio" and the "Directory". Evidently Anglicanism was entirely wrong to them. But the Independents couldn't go all the way with the Presbyterians. They accepted most of their ideas, but maintained that every church was and must be autonymous. The final authority rested not with Bishops, nor with Eldershops, but with the body of worshippers who formed the church. Each such member was a king and priest with God,

Now, each section claimed the authority of the Scriptures for the position they respectively adopted. And each was right. There seems no doubt, as Canon Streeter<sup>1</sup> has pointed out, that the Apostolic Church was at first an Independent Church; that it became presbyterian in form of government, as it extended its boundaries, and new churches began to spring up in the neighbouring districts; and that it gradually evolved into something like Episcopacy, in its method of setting a Bishop over a province, who should look after the interests, and possibly co-ordinate the work, of the churches in that larger area.

If Streeter is right, and no doubt there is much in the New Testament to warrant his statements, then the disagreements of the Sixteenth Century were due to a misreading of Scripture, or to the fault of seeing one idea to the

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1: "The Primitive Church".

exclusion of others. But this raises a larger question, viz, what is meant by the authority of Scripture? Granted that the Independents and Presbyterians conscientiously believed that their respective programme was the only one authorised by, and exemplified in, the Scriptures, was it absolutely essential that they should adhere strictly to the letter of the Scriptures? We today, of course, answer in the negative. The Puritans answered in the affirmative. They were slaves to the Bible. And nothing not sanctioned by it, could be regarded as lawful; while whatever was sanctioned, could not be disregarded. This was the real stumbling-block in the way to compromise between the Anglicans and Puritans. To the former, human reason was also authoritative. On the authority of Scripture Hooker said; "Whatsoever we believe concerning salvation by Christ, although the Scripture be therein the ground of our belief; Yet the authority of man is, .....the key which openeth the door of entrance into the knowledge of the Scripture. The Scripture doth not teach us the things that are of God, unless we did credit men who have taught us that the words of Scripture do signifie those things. Someway therefore, notwithstanding man's infirmity, yet his Authority may inforce assent. ....For if the natural strength of man's wit may by

experience and study attain unto such ripeness in the knowledge of things humane, that man.....may presume to build somewhat upon their judgement, what reason have we to think but that even in matters Divine, the like wits furnisht with necessary helps, exercised in Scripture with diligence, and assisted with the grace of God Almighty, may grow unto so much perfection of knowledge, that men shall have just cause, when anything pertinent unto Faith and Religion is doubted of, the more willingly to incline their minds towards that which the sentence of so grave, wise and learned in that faculty shall judge most sound".<sup>1</sup> And Hooker has the Puritans in mind when he says, "The Schoole of Rome teach Scripture to be insufficient.....except Traditions were added.....others justly condemning this opinion, grow likewise unto a dangerous extremity.....in such sort, that to do anything according to any other Law, were not only unnecessary, but even opposite unto salvation, unlawful and sinful....."<sup>2</sup>

This puritan unreasonableness, or this slavish adherence to the letter of Scripture, not only prejudiced the puritans against the whole system of Anglicanism, and prevented them from coming to common agreements, but it was prejudicial to their own success as a spiritual and moral

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1: Hooker, "Ecclesiastical Polity", (Ed. 1682) Book II.p.118  
 2: Ibid. pp. 123-124

force in the nation. We have endeavoured to shew in Chapter II that the puritans had a zeal for moral reforms; that they stressed the necessary connection between religious faith and an ethical life; that they insisted that all church-members should live lives that were consonant with their profession. Faith to them was not merely an intellectual assent to a creed, but it carried with it the obligation to endeavour strenuously to live a moral life which was in keeping with the commandments of scripture. So far, so good. As an ideal this was splendid.

There were however several weaknesses in this position. In the first place, life in the puritan age wasn't like life in the days when the Scriptural Commandments were written, and therefore, since the puritans accepted the Bible as a legalistic document, or a compendium of morals, they had to try and interpret the old laws to meet the extensive evils of their age. And, by the way, they used their reason here in the interpretation or extension of scripture! This led to the making of laws that were too burdensome for the natural man to bear.

In the second place, this imposition of Scriptural ideas, which were a law outside of man, demanding his obedience, was not made with the Christian promise of God's grace and help, so that a man might feel he was sufficient for the task. Puritanism was not an evangelical faith but

a legalistic religion. Man's rise to the heights of moral goodness must be accomplished by his own efforts; by a Godly discipline, in which there was more self-discipline than Divine assistance and Grace.

It is easy in the twentieth century to criticise men of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But we have to remember that a great deal of water has run under the bridge since then. We have the advantage of a few centuries of learning and experience, as well as the advantage of starting where the puritans left off. Hence we can see now flaws in their system, and put our finger on the cause of them.

Their idea of God, for instance, was wholly transcendent. He was the great Sovereign, the absolute ruler and judge, who looked down upon men and their deeds, and passed judgment, but left them to fight their own battles. He had given them, however, a book of rules - the Bible; and this was their charter, their compendium of morals, and they must do their best to keep the law. In this outlook or point of view, they resembled the Hebrews more than the true disciples of Christ. They were engaged in carrying out laws, instead of cherishing a spirit which finds its birth and nourishment and strength in fellowship with Jesus Christ.

The result was that puritan morality became largely, if not altogether, an attempt to carry out the commandments of



the Scriptures, and their own deductions from the same. Since, for instance, the Sabbath must be kept holy, then it became necessary for them to decide what constituted Sabbath-breaking. Hence all the laws which we have mentioned in Chapter II. These, as well as most of their laws which attempted to regulate morals, are purely arbitrary - the decrees of men who are anxious to prevent every appearance of evil, and who, because they have the Bible commands before them, constitute themselves into a court of legislature with powers to deduce new laws from the Scriptural Commands.

The puritans, of course, could do no other. They were not 'Evangelicals'. Predestination was an idea that precluded the very suggestion that a man could be saved from evil by faith in Jesus Christ, and thus made a law unto himself, because the law of Christ was written in his heart. Faith meant no more than a belief that Christ had paid the penalty of man's sins. Faith was not the medium by which new life came into the believer, making him more or less independent of Scriptural Commandments, because he was in vital relationship with the Inspirer of all true and beautiful thoughts.

Ralph Cudworth did set such ideas before the Long Parliament in 1647 in a sermon.<sup>1</sup> But he was of the group

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1: A Sermon preached before the House of Commons, March 31st 1647. The Fac-simile Text Society, New York, 1930.

of Cambridge platonists who were breaking away from the narrowness of puritan theology. "It is a piece of that corruption that runneth through humane nature", he said, "that we naturally prize Truth more than Goodnesse, Knowledge more than Holinesse. We think it a gallant thing to be fluttering up to Heaven with our wings of Knowledge and Speculation; whereas, the highest mystery of a Divine Life here, and of perfect Happinesse hereafter, consisteth in nothing but mere Obedience to the Divine Will. Happinesse is nothing but that inward sweet delight, that will arise from the Harmonious Agreement between our wills and God's will. There is nothing contrary to God in the whole world, nothing that fights against him but Self-will".<sup>1</sup> So far Cudworth had said little which the Puritan could not say, and which Milton had not said in his own way in his great epic, except that the Puritans would scarcely have granted the truth of the assertion that "there is nothing contrary to God in the whole world.....but self-will". To them there was very much in the world that was contrary to God, even perhaps the world itself, which was under the curse, a "Vanity Fair", a "City of Destruction". But Cudworth goes on: "These things I write unto you, (saith our Apostle) that you sin not; therein expressing the end of the whole Gospel, which is, not onely to cover

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1: Ibid. p.19

sinne, by spreading the Purple Robe of Christ's death and sufferings over it, while it still remaineth in us with all its filth and noisomenesse unremoved; but also to convey a powerful and mighty spirit of holiness to cleanse and free us from it.<sup>1</sup>.....Christ came not into the world onely to cast a Mantle over us, and hide all our filthy sores from God's avenging Eye with his merits and righteousness; but he came likewise to be a Chirurgeon and Physician of souls..... The gospel is a true Bethesda, a pool of Grace, where such poore, lame, infirme creatures as we are, upon the moving of God's Spirit in it, may descend down not onely to wash our skin and outside, but also to be cured of our diseases within".<sup>2</sup> And Cudworth rejects the puritan God who, "to exercise his absolute authority, his uncontrollable dominion, delights.....in plunging souls down into infernal night and everlasting darkness". To him such a God was "Nothing but a cruel and dreadful Erinnys with curled, fiery snakes about his head and firebrands in his hands....." And he concludes, "surely this (idea of God) will make us either secretly to think that there is no God at all in the world,..... or else to wish heartily there were none".

Cudworth however did not represent puritanism. He saw in Christ not a mere saviour from the fires of hell,

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1: Ibid. p.29  
 2: Ibid. pp. 29-30

who saved men because he had paid the penalty of their sin. But he saw in Christ what Clutton-Brock calls "The Absolute values of goodness, truth and beauty," And to him men are saved here and now when they possess the mind of Christ, when they cherish these same values. Hence the world was not to him a "Vanity Fair", nor "A carcass that possessed neither life nor loveliness"; it was the sphere of goodness, truth and beauty, if only men could approach it with the reverent spirit of Christ.

The puritans condemned the world, the flesh and the devil; and most of them failed to see what Milton saw, that it was disobedience to God, or what Cudworth called "self-will" that makes things evil that were intended for good. Hence the puritans, instead of seeking, by the cultivation of the presence of that God who is Goodness, Truth and Beauty, to create that type of mind that is not fascinated by the gross sins of the world, endeavoured to remove temptations where possible by closing theatres, forbidding certain kinds of recreation, censoring the publication of books, and by branding all manner of things as wrong. In other words, they tried to regulate the moral life of men according to their arbitrary ideas of what they conceived to be lawful or unlawful according to the Scriptures.

This puritan outlook and method had many shortcomings. In the first place it tended to produce a false idea of goodness. The observance of external rules - Sabbath observance, keeping oneself from drink, sensuality, swearing and the like - became the criterion of the good life. The spirit of a man might be stern, hard, even cruel - far from goodness. As we have seen in the chapter on the Ethics of Business, so-called good puritans could drive hard bargains, and be oppressive to the poor. Puritanism tended to produce a standard of respectability, but this was not always christianity. The weightiest matter of the law - love - was often lacking; and a sternness that was unfeeling for others often guided the heart.

This can be seen on a grand scale in the attitude of the puritans during the period of their supremacy. It may be "an attribute of God himself when mercy seasons justice", but the puritans took no notice of Shakespeare, nor of the teaching of Christ about loving your enemies, when they had got the reins of government into their hands. The Bishops and the whole order of Episcopacy had to go, and what property was not confiscated to the use of government was enjoyed by the puritan divines. Charles I and their chief enemies, Laud and Wentworth, were sacrificed on the altar of revenge. And the leaders of this parliament, as we have seen, were no less open to bribery and corruption than their

predecessors. And their fight for liberty, while no doubt it paved the way to liberty, was, especially with the presbyterians, merely a fight for liberty for themselves; liberty to do as they desired.

This puritan standard of respectability which passed as christianity, this separation from the vices of the flesh and the pleasures of the world, is a tradition that has been handed down to our time, and is slow in dying. It is surprising how many 'good' people look askance still at dancing, theatre-going, cards, joy-rides on the Sabbath, etc. And yet these very people see nothing wrong, or inconsistent with their religious professions, in driving a hard bargain in business, in drawing rents from slum-dwellers which are more than they can afford to pay, and more than their miserable dwelling is worth. It is difficult of course to be consistent in our life and profession. But the puritan method of ordering life by arbitrary rules of conduct was to court inconsistency.

In the second place the puritans' outlook made them suspicious of beauty. Beauty in an individual, or in a building, or in a picture, was a snare of the devil. It appealed too much to the senses - to the flesh and its appetites, and therefore it was too dangerous and must be condemned. We are aware that the Vestments of priests, pictures, images and music in churches were anathema to the

early puritans on the ground that they were relics of popery. And while that in itself was sufficient to ban them, we cannot help feeling that there was another reason why these things were condemned. One thing can be said with truth of puritanism, viz, that it was a religion which made its appeal chiefly, if not altogether, to the reason or intellect. It was the prophet who was the central figure in their worship: the prophet expounding the scriptures, and making known the ways of God to man. What could he have to do with the distractions of vestments, pictures, or anything beautiful or ornate? The mind must not be allured from the things of vital importance by these gaudy trappings. And this we feel was the unconscious reason of the vandalism which set no store on the beauties of architecture, organs, images, and pictures, but in destroying them was conscious of the approval of God.

Pictures and statuary, because they had been objects of worship, had been largely removed in the early days of Elizabeth:<sup>1</sup> but music and chanting, vanities and offences to the puritan soul, continued till the Ordinance<sup>2</sup> of 1644 removed them. "During the troubles which followed the

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1: Vide Supra, p.46. cp. Neal, "Puritans" (1822), Vol.I. p.42.

2: Scobell, "Acts and Ordinances", Part I. pp 69-70.  
(Statute 1644, cap.38)

death of King Charles I", writes W. S. Rockstro "the cultivation of English music was utterly extinguished. Not only was progress impossible: it was equally impossible, in face of the open hostility of the Puritans, to maintain the high level that had been already attained. The Cathedral and Collegiate Libraries were sacked by the Roundheads; the great organs were destroyed; all singing worthy of the name was prohibited in the desecrated churches, and dramatic music was publicly condemned as a snare of the evil one".<sup>1</sup>  
 This criticism is perhaps too drastic.<sup>2</sup> Orlando Mansfield maintains on the other hand that the destruction was carried out not by Cromwell's Ironsides, who "were too sober and godly a set of men to break down the organs and pawn the pipes at several ale-houses for pots of ale, but by that human scum and wreckage which always hangs about the rear of a military force".

"Possibly too", he goes on, "these vandals were countenanced or assisted by men who had suffered in person and estate for their religious and political principles - wise men driven mad by oppression - who now deemed they

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1: Quoted by Traill, "Social England", Vol.IV. p.400

2: Vide Article, "England's Indebtedness to Nonconformity musically" in the "Congregation Quarterly", January 1930, by Orlando Mansfield, Mus. Doc.



were doing God good service by destroying everything which might remind them of the regal and ecclesiastical tyranny to which they had been subjected".<sup>1</sup>

And the same authority points out that the destruction was not very general, and where it did take place it was not "an altogether unmixed evil" - for the use of organs, "was not to accompany congregational singing, but to add brilliancy by the addition of "all possible embellishments by means of florid runs, not unlike the extemporaneous dis-cant in which country organists were wont to indulge many years back while accompanying the chants and psalms". To that style of music, said Mr Davey, "the Puritans objected; and so should we object if we heard it now, only instead of destroying the instrument we should give the organist notice to quit.....so then.....in the removal of the musical absurdities above mentioned (the Puritans) certainly did more good than harm in this respect".<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Dr Mansfield maintains that the puritans' "attack on ecclesiastical music strengthened the interest in secular music, and that its popularity increased rather than diminished".<sup>3</sup> And he quotes Milton, as saying that in the London of his day lutes, viols and guitars were

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1: Orlando Mansfield, Ibid. p.45.

2: Ibid. p.46.

3: Ibid. p.46 (quoted from Dr Speath's "Milton's Knowledge of Music".)

to be found "in every house". And Mr Davy is cited as declaring, "that to speak of music per se as being prohibited or even discouraged during the Commonwealth is "absolute and unqualified falsehood".<sup>1</sup> "The leading Nonconformists", he goes on, "were the greatest music lovers of that time." Cromwell engaged John Hingston as his private organist at a salary of £100 a year, and he also made good the salaries of some organists who had lost their appointments by the demolition of the cathedral organs.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, it was during the Protectorate that the first real English Opera was produced. "The Siege of Rhodes", written by Sir William Davenant, was licensed for performance by Cromwell, on May 23rd 1656. And E. J. Dent, in his "Foundations of English Opera", speaks of the Protectorate as "the only period at which serious opera in English, set to music all through.....has ever enjoyed a real and supreme popularity with English audiences".<sup>3</sup>

The Protector also showed his interest in music by favourably entertaining a petition, dated February 1656, "that there should be a Corporation or College of Musicians created in London, with reasonable powers to read and practice publicquely all sorts of musick". A Committee was appointed

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1: Ibid. p.46.  
 2: Ibid. p.46.  
 3: Ibid. p.47.

to "receive any addresses that shall be made to them in order to ye advancement of Musick, and to report to ye ~~Council~~ as they shall have cause". The death of Cromwell alone prevented the founding of this English College of Music.<sup>1</sup>

And the same writer points out that in the realm of Hymnology the Puritans or Nonconformists of the 18th century hold the premier position. Isaac Watts and John Wesley revolutionised congregational singing. Lord Selborne said, "the English Independents as represented by Dr. Watts have a just claim to be considered the real founders of modern hymnology".<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless experience of non-conformist church music confirms the fact that the puritans were suspicious of music in the service of worship. Until comparatively recent times, Organs and chanting were condemned, and even hymns were not eagerly accepted in place of the Psalms. And the barn-like buildings, without any adornment, were evidently preferable to the Gothic, if numbers were anything to go by. And pictures and images are still looked for in vain. It came as a surprise if not as a shock to the writer to see in some of the New-England churches beautiful and expensive pictures adorning the walls by the side of the

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1: Ibid. pp.46-47.

2: Ibid. p.21.

pulpit. The puritan tradition is evidently losing its grip in that puritan stronghold.

In this despising or ignoring of beauty we cannot help feeling that the puritans not only robbed worship of one of its aids to the culture and refinement of the soul, but also, ipso facto, hindered man from growing into that appreciation of beauty and order in the ordinary social and industrial arrangements of life, which make for human happiness and well-being. Many of the towns of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and of Lancashire, where puritan business-men developed great and profitable industries, are so depressing to anyone in whom the aesthetic sense is developed, that the memory of it is a nightmare. That people should be herded together in small, cheerless, insanitary dwellings, situated in streets adjoining factories, where the belching smoke, the evil smells, the noise, the absence of all vegetation and every vestige of beauty are destructive both to body and soul, is a social crime. And that it continues, is due largely to the fact that the sense of beauty has been discredited, and the sense of utility has been put in its place. And we are still slow to see the necessary connection between goodness and beauty. They are both attributes of God: and the sooner men see this, the sooner will those ugly spots to be found in most cities and towns be removed, to the general health and happiness, as

well as to the moral and spiritual well-being of those who are condemned to dwell in such areas.

But when all is said about the many short-comings of puritanism, looking back upon the religious and political movements of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, one cannot avoid the conclusion that puritanism produced more of good than of evil. The movement itself, quite apart from the value of its ideas and ideals, acted as a tonic. It stirred up the nation and made men think on the serious problems of religion, politics and business. Men could not be wholly indifferent to these matters, when a considerable number in their midst were passionately enthusiastic about and prepared to suffer for, these matters. And it seems to us that the puritans brought a new seriousness into the consciousness of English people in their approach to life. The laxity of the Restoration period was a natural reaction. But it was not permanent; it was a passing phase. And the puritans' seriousness in religion; their connecting of religion with a moral life, comes into vigour again in the non-conformist bodies, in the Wesleyan revival, and in the evangelical revival in the Anglican church. Doctrinally there was a change from Calvinism to Arminianism. 'Grace' takes the place of 'Absolute decrees'. But the puritan seriousness was there, and puritanism had prepared the ground.

And this seriousness is moreover seen in the 'Industrial Revival' of the eighteenth century, which, apart from the evils it brought with it, nevertheless animated men with a pride in good workmanship, and with a sturdy independence. It was felt to be incumbent on a man to make the best use of his opportunities, and to be independent of charity and doles.

In literature too, after the lapse at the Restoration, little appeal was made to the sensual. There is evidence of a desire on the part of most writers to portray life under the government of wise and moral and religious ideals. And the 'Novel' which now appeared tended to become the medium for the criticising of manners and the portraying of good manners, and even for the criticism of abuses.

And it must be granted that, even if, in the fight for freedom, the presbyterian puritans shewed little more than a desire for freedom for their own ideas, and the Independents, though more tolerant, fell short of the ideal, nevertheless they paved the way to freedom both in religion and in politics. The puritan movement in this matter marks a definite breaking away from authority. Absolutism either in church or state could no longer be accepted. The individual has rights which are sacred, and which must not be violated.

It is surprising how inconsistent the puritans were:

how departmentalised their ideas seemed to be. They could not see with Whitgift or Hooker that the individual had a right, and a sacred duty, to use his own judgment in the interpretation of Scripture. What was written, was written, and must be accepted. The Scripture was an absolute authority. But the puritans used their own judgment and emphasised the right to do so, when they pleaded for liberty of conscience, and did so much to win this liberty! The individual tended to become his own judge of what was lawful: his reason the final authority.

Thus was the way paved to that religion of the spirit, which claims the right of access to its Maker, which in religion is perfect freedom; and to that view of social and political life which claims a share in the making of laws, and acknowledges obligations towards them, which in this sphere is also perfect freedom.

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